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POEMS.



# POEMS.

BY

LINUS, F. A.

LONDON :

E. T. WHITFIELD, 178, STRAND.

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*In the great picture Life has made for me,  
Where are so many gracious ones, who bear  
Love's radiant aspect, and the purple wear  
And myrtle, with which faithful memory  
Invests those known in youth, two forms I see :  
Before the infinite of Life they stand,  
Like ministers of Life, most fair and grand ;  
One has a brave and helpful dignity,  
As knowing that light service will not bless ;  
The other is so fragile, the blue heaven  
Seems folding her away, only her face  
Is turn'd towards me with yearning tenderness ;  
Theirs the ennobling grace by meekness given  
To those whose ministry has amplest space.*

THE  
PRIESTESS OF ISIS.



## THE PRIESTESS OF ISIS.

---

Who is this sitting by the crescent Nile,  
With pale, still face that seems too sad to smile,  
Though bearing all the tender lines of youth ;  
With downcast eyes ; so weary in her ruth,  
So heedless of the hot and glaring noon,  
And of the rising of the summer moon ?  
Since the day dawn'd, the hot west wind has blown,  
And over her the yellow sand has sown.  
The luscious fruit of the date-palm has hung  
In purple clusters near ; still her hands lie  
Listless and folded, still her lips are dry,  
Her tired eyes burning, and her cloud-like hair  
Is heavy with the sand the wind has flung ;

And still the maiden sits so moveless there,  
Nor moistens her parch'd lips, nor rests her eyes,  
Nor heeds the sand that gathering round her lies.  
Mysterious and solemn is the stream,  
So quick and still ; and the young watcher's dream  
Is in grave unison. Though workmen's toil  
Has waken'd echoes in the rocks that lie  
So near her, and though happy children laugh  
Beside her, as they part their hard-earn'd spoil,  
And from the dates the purple juices quaff ;  
Though the same orb'd moon in heaven lies,  
That had look'd down with calm, approving smile  
Upon the happy priestess of the Nile,  
She only looks with dimm'd, unconscious eyes  
Upon the outer world ; but memory  
Draws from the past bright pictures even now ;  
And one by one, as from the living bough  
Fall the bright petals of the cistus' flowers,  
So fresh and lovely still the breathing hours  
Thus parted from her life before her lie.

Her sacred vestments she has thrown aside,  
Or hides them 'neath the folds, heavy and wide,  
Of a gray cloak, like those the hermits wore,  
Whose caves were in the rocky Lybian shore.

A lily stretches out its yielding stem,  
And bears its fragrant beauty proudly up  
On the dark bosom of the swelling stream ;  
Until borne down, the tender flower-cup,  
Though sullied, closes in protectingly,  
To keep the pureness vital in its heart :  
And she who watches may have match'd, in part,  
Its fond, aspiring trust, its destiny,  
With her young, hopeful spirit, and its woe,  
Her ardent spirit seeking life and light  
From earth and heaven,—glorious in its trust ;  
But that, betray'd, its portion death or night,  
The conscious death of every high hope crush'd  
By that which fed it first. She murmurs low :

“The gods beheld me through my mother's eyes ;  
I know by the long look, the hush'd, charm'd ways

Of children when they see me ; the surprise  
That gives such sunny light to maidens' eyes ;  
I know by the kind, lingering regard  
Of busy matrons ; by the tenderness  
Of deep-toned voices when they speak my name ;  
And by low, gracious words, that seem to bless  
As soft, rich music blesses, when it falls  
Upon the spirit in the twilight hour,  
And floats along the Temple's flowery halls :  
And if the gods have left their sign on me,  
Must I not share their immortality ?

“The gods ! what have I said ? One burning truth  
Has given some light to my mistaken youth.  
In his triumphal march and fervid strength,  
The sun looks down upon this answering stream,  
Until its bosom throbs before his smile,  
And lifts its warm love-burthen for his beam :  
So seem'd, great Isis ! that still look of thine ;  
So seem'd this kindling, throbbing life of mine.  
But ah ! I lived not ! 'Twas not life, to stand

Before the marble altar, watching thee ;  
It was not life, to feed thy paling fires,  
To tend the consecrated flowers, or be  
The sweetest singer of thy sacred strain,  
The fairest and most favour'd of thy train.

“ Who call'd me from that long, ignoble sleep ?  
What answer'd to that far-off, solemn cry ?  
I know not whether from the earth it came,  
Or from the farthest arches of the sky ;  
'Twas answer'd by some life within my own,  
Deeper and higher than I e'er had known.  
And thou hast fallen ! How long did I dream  
Under those flower-wreaths ? How long did thy  
eyes,

O cold, calm Isis ! o'er my young life seem  
A spell, to shape and rule its destinies ?  
The spell is broken now ; but all is gone,  
All that my poor, weak heart could rest upon.”

This is young Thea of the Temple's shrine,  
Most favour'd maid of Isis, the divine,

For the still, moon-like beauty of her face,  
And for her spirit's pure and tender grace,  
So quiet, yet so laden with the fire  
Of worship, and of reverent desire ;  
Sweet Thea, stepping with sure, maiden tread  
From her green May into the flush of June,  
To find its promised flowers uptorn and dead,  
And its bird-melody all out of tune.

Why has she left the Temple's sacred shade ?  
Why in that sombre garb is she array'd ?  
She has been first and fairest in the press  
Where all were beautiful or noble ; why  
Sits she alone in so long dreariness,  
With the rapt look and pensive tone of one  
Whose youth the gods have set their mark upon ?

That Temple, whose white walls so purely gleam  
In the mild lustre of the moon's full beam,  
Was Thea's home ; and, until yesternight,  
Honour'd, as it was beautiful and bright ;  
But yesterday, as in the sculptured grove  
Of flower-wreath'd columns, the young priestess wove

The garlands for the festival of eve,  
She heard the priest his secret counsel give :

“The Temple’s courts and shrines must all be graced  
With rare device, for royal guest, to-night.  
Our mighty ones must hold diminish’d state  
Behind this Tyrian purple, and the light  
Of crystal lamps outshine the radiant brow  
Of our great Isis ; and these forms that fold  
The noble columns that they seem to bear,—  
Majestic type are they, engraven there,  
Of godlike strength, whose presence must uphold,—  
Shall be conceal’d behind the breathing wreaths  
Of lotus flowers, whose cold, pale buds shall smile  
Beside the glowing roses we have nursed  
So long, in the fair gardens of the Nile :  
For Hadrian will see these courts to-night ;  
And he, for whom the world is one vast throne,  
Must find no warrior-deity enshrined.  
And we must open what was all our own,

The inner Temple, which no vulgar eyes  
Have ever yet beheld, and would discern  
No truth in its chaste beauty if they look'd ;  
For Hadrian doth seek our lore to learn ;  
And he who thinks the crown of empire poor,  
Beside the laurel of the poet's wreath,—  
Who yields up empire to a deity  
Whom he calls Justice,—and who sees beneath  
The royalty and destiny of kings,  
The still, veil'd spirit to be revered more,—  
Who looks beyond the homage of his throne,  
And finds One mightier to bow before,—  
Will venerate no sacred mystery  
Behind these veils, no vital glory see  
In our dead symbols, and will scarcely draw  
One inspiration from our Temple's law.  
And tell young Thea that the sacred light  
Beside the shrine will need no watch to-night.  
'Tis said that Hadrian favours the new faith :  
We find it not unworthy. Here, he saith,

He will build up a temple and a shrine  
To Him of Galilee, that shall outshine  
All that the Gentiles built ; and if this be,  
We know his single soul can only see  
Virtue in love, as it is wide, and free  
From earthly dross, or woman's ministry.  
Nought of the nations' faith can Hadrian own,  
Except that Love is being's aim and end ;  
Not Love materialized, its essence known  
To the dull crowds, as but a thing of sense,  
Life's herald, or our great queen's influence,  
With all that to her gracious look doth tend ;  
But that true Love which makes each thought and  
    deed  
Serve gladly those of greater worth or need."

Warming the courts of Isis, lighting up  
Crimson and purple, silver, gems and gold  
In mingling radiance, as a jewell'd cup  
Brightens the sparkling wine, all uncontroll'd,

The smiling goddess held her festive rite  
On Philæ's fair and sacred isle last night.  
As the warm sunset of a blushing even,  
All was so tenderly, so warmly glowing ;  
And white-robed forms, as the moon floats o'er heaven,  
Upon the azure floor were softly flowing.  
The harmony of movement and the grace  
Of glance and smile were there ; the far-off space,  
The column'd staircase and the flowery aisle,  
Were radiant with bright maidens of the Nile.  
And mingling strangely in the festive scene,  
Clothed in the linen garb of holiness,  
Were stern-brow'd men of reverend age or mien ;  
While the responsive roofs and glad aisles rung,  
As pausing not, the sacred maidens sung :

“The faint cry of famine  
The low sob of pain,  
The anguish of longing,  
Went up from the plain.

The vengeful Destroyer

Has breathed o'er the vale ;

• He has parch'd up the rice fields

And blighted the gale.

The vale of Mobarek

Is wasted and low ;

And the Stream of the Blessing

Is sterile and slow.

The mighty, the Sun-god,

His triumph pursues ;

The fire from his chariot

The trouble renews.

O Queen of the Valley !

Attend to our cry :

The waters are failing,—

O give, or we die !

The vale of Mobarek  
Is wasted and low ;  
And the Stream of the Blessing  
Is sterile and slow."

The cry of thanksgiving  
Ascends from the plain,  
The glad hymn of worship,  
Again and again.

"O vale of Mobarek,  
What kindles thy breast ?  
'Tis the hand of the Sun-god  
Stretch'd forth towards the West.

O bountiful river,  
What quickens thy flow ?  
What power is around thee,  
Above or below ?

'Tis the white-footed goddess  
Who smiles from the sky,  
Who bids thee rejoice  
That the bridal is nigh.

Soft tears 'mid her smiling  
Fall fast on the land ;  
They fall as quick blessings  
On every hand.

Osiris is bending  
Low down from his car ;  
He has seen the mild eyes  
Of his lady afar.

And in his high triumph  
He pauses awhile,  
And tenderly answers  
The tear and the smile.

He calls up the rain-clouds  
To temper his ray ;  
They come from the ocean  
And curtain his way.

From the generous South  
He is coming apace,  
The love in his heart  
And the smile on his face.

O Lady of Beauty !  
The star of his love,  
The kindly star-herald  
Is beaming above.

O Io ! loved Io !  
Most glorious now,  
Draw closer the light cloud  
That falls o'er thy brow.

O happy and loved one !  
The curtain of even  
Cannot hide all the rapture  
That trembles in heaven."

Young Thea sees herself amongst the rest,  
Still as if moving in the crowd alone :  
And was she then nursing within her breast  
A different hope or purpose ? Was it one  
Wiser and holier, that a deeper shade  
Of thought upon her youthful brow was laid ?  
And that a tear with her remembrance falls ?

Again before her rise the Temple's halls,  
As when she last beheld them. Who are they  
That in the still and lonely Temple stray  
With the cool midnight ? By his lowly tread  
And simple aspect, who would recognize  
The royal Hadrian ? The priestly guise  
Of his companion is more plainly read ;

That is a royal page who follows now,  
With those large dreamy eyes and that full brow.  
The courts seem quite deserted ; all is still ;  
The crystal lamps, by the high pontiff's will,  
Screen smiling Isis ; and the full wreath'd flowers,  
And cloth of Tyrian purple and of gold,  
Fall over the carved columns. To behold  
The wondrous symbols of celestial powers,  
The king withdraws their veil ; and with the priest  
He talks, as with one reading the same book,  
A book profound, if not the holiest.  
The priestess, faithful to her trust, is there,  
Watching the shrine with sad, though reverent, air ;  
And as the imperial visitors draw near,  
She hides behind some drapery in fear,  
Remembering the priest's unwonted scorn  
Of things so sacred held, until that morn ;  
Though not to her his mandate had been borne.  
Yes, Thea, that pale, cowering form is thine,  
So strangely startled from the holy shrine ;

And though not all that king and pontiff say  
Is comprehended, yet enough is known  
To drive the already sorely wounded one  
Into the dreary, homeless world away.

“From heaven the sculptor inspiration took,  
And faithfully he told his truth divine,  
When to these columns, numberless, he gave  
To each the same grand form, eternal sign  
Of the one, ever-present, mighty Love ;  
Repeated thus, in meaning yet more grave ;  
For Love must always bear the arch of Faith ;  
And from each aspect is the same calm Love,  
Looking on every side with answering eyes,  
That have from all things true and grand replies.”

So reading for himself from shaft and wall  
A poem or a doctrine, suiting thence  
His varying mood, as from the earth we all  
Suit its high lessons to our difference,

The king pass'd quickly to the inner shrine,  
Where only priests may worship, only they  
Who recognize a spirit-law divine.  
The shrine is lighted by a glowing ray,  
Whose sphere hangs in the jewell'd dome ; here reigns  
A chaster, richer beauty than enchains  
The crowd who wait without. The amber floor  
The priest treads reverently, and kneels before  
The altar, whose white, polish'd base doth bear  
On either side a sculptured form, most fair  
In its pure human lines. Across the breast  
Of one, whose look doth on the altar rest,  
Whose still, fair arms are folded, lies the band  
Of rainbow light, as hallowing heart and hand.  
Over the other, all so purely white,  
It seems as if receding from the gaze,  
With wings outspread, as if for instant flight,  
And eager eyes uplooking, the quick rays  
Are like a questioning message out of heaven.  
Those marble symbols the great monarch sees ;

But to the page is living vision given,  
And type more warmly eloquent than these.

If ever from the breast of o'er-ripe rose  
A breathing, blushing petal softly slid,  
That is a living and a blushing girl  
Gliding behind those columns of wreath'd pearl.  
If ever, where most lonely streamlet flows,  
A trembling moonbeam innocently glided,  
Behind those garlands, in the deepening night,  
A trembling maiden hastens from their sight,  
Betray'd by her long veil of silver light ;  
Betray'd to the arch priest she must have been,  
Ere she could hide behind that leafy screen ;  
Or why that sudden change in look and sense,  
As to the king he spoke with reverence  
Of Egypt's faith, and the so certain light  
In which those lived who read its faith aright ;  
Of untaught natures needing grosser aid,  
Who through sense-worship only can be made  
To apprehend an influence not their own ?

But Hadrian heeded not the look or tone,  
And said,—bent on some purpose of his own :  
“The spirit has two lives ; that bound to earth  
Is cold and joyless ; from the second birth,  
Thrill’d with the harmony of God-made things,  
Joining in worship of the King of kings,  
It strives to meet its destiny, and springs  
Ready, all bondage of the earth to sever,  
With look heaven seeking, and on new-found wings,  
To be at one with heaven and God for ever.  
Here it has found its good, and is at rest,  
With pinions folded o’er the treasure blest,  
The holiest love within a human breast.  
Thy symbols have the highest truth, well told ;  
’Tis thus we read them in our moods most rare ;  
But yet another truth they may unfold,—  
The type of the communion we must share  
With Deity, when all our being turns  
To Him for knowledge, I discern to-night.  
Ah ! how that quick and glorious creature yearns

That it may read in characters of light  
The future as it issues from the past ;  
When read, how like a god he rests upon  
His wisdom ! Now on thee the light has shone,  
Great priest ! and we must know how fate doth cast  
That future for ourselves."

Thea, why wait ?

Hast thou not heard enough ? Why heed what fate  
Has in the future for the unknown king ?  
Thou canst not know the priest's reply will bring  
Death to that beautiful but dreaming youth.  
Thou canst not read the law of sacrifice ;  
Enough that thou must live it. Is this truth,  
That never thought or deed of thine had rise  
Out of the highest life,—that thou hast nursed  
No sacred fires,—that even thy lady's eyes  
Could look on untrue service, things accursed,  
In the true sight of him, the great high-priest !  
Even Isis may have been a falsehood too,—

The priest reveres her not. This too thou seest,  
His daily service and his solemn mien,  
Life of his secret soul have never been.  
The wisdom thou hast had was pure and true ;  
For truth and purity are freely pour'd  
Into life's crystal chalice, ere 'tis stored  
From baser sources ; only harmony  
Can come from the young spirit while 'tis strung  
By the one master-hand ; though sometimes rung  
By strange, unworthy touch its chords may be.  
Thea will die rather than one false chord  
Shall ring in her young life before its Lord.

So when she saw the priestly mockery  
Of that most sacred altar,—saw the king,  
Great Hadrian, upon his bended knee,  
Yielding to earthly use each holy thing,  
Even hope of the great future after death,  
That in the happy fervour of her faith  
Had seem'd a grace almost too high to be

The issue of the present,—from the fane  
She fled, as from a foe whose perfidy,  
Although discover'd, could not lose its bane.  
She wander'd in the grove of the date-palm,  
Bewilder'd by so swift calamity,  
Until the morning broke. There was no balm,  
Either of earth or heaven, that she could lay  
To such a grief as this : beneath her feet  
To feel the sound, firm earth passing away  
Would not have been more strange ; for until  
now,

Whatever care beset her, she could meet  
With help and comfort, seemingly from Heaven.  
Now from all resting-place her heart was riven ;  
There was no blessing on her weary brow,  
And of a worthier hope no sign was given.

So morning found her by the river side  
In her white robe and with her troubled air,  
Not knowing whom to seek or where to hide,  
Or that she look'd so strange and lonely there.

A hermit saw her as he made his way  
From a poor Christian saint, with whom to pray  
And talk of holy things he sometimes stayed  
All night, then cross'd the stream at break of day.  
He stopp'd his boat ; and by his kindly aid  
Thea was taken from the pagan isle :  
But when he landed, and would leave the Nile  
For his lone, desert home, she would not stray  
From the still sacred river ; so she sate  
All day communing with her own sad fate,  
Living again the scenes of yesterday,  
Those scenes made thrice more cruel as they lay  
Before a mind so worn by long unrest.  
And so the summer drought but lightly press'd  
Upon her form, though it was frail as fair :  
Her spirit only seem'd to live and bear.  
The reverend hermit having vainly striven  
To soothe or lead her to his home, at even  
His gentle daughter came, and ere night fell,  
Thea went calmly to their rock-hewn cell.

Few days have pass'd since then, and on the Nile  
Hadrian is sailing for the sacred isle.

“Glowing and changeful, as of burnish'd gold,  
With every gem inwrought, the landscape lies.  
The crystal arch of heaven doth scarcely hold  
The sun, low hanging in the evening skies.  
How the far desert glitters in those beams !  
From yonder mountains, light in rosy streams  
Pours forth a borrow'd glory. The bright air  
The sculptured trees in gold-like cirque doth bear.  
The breeze comes laden with the scented balm  
Of white and purple blossoms. Welcome ever,  
O tender Night ! Welcome thy pleasant calm,  
Folding the flower and the stately palm !  
List ! every sound is as a word of Heaven ;  
And, happy token to a world forgiven !  
A living star crowns the pure brow of even.  
The newly-wedded moon with promise laden  
Moves through the bridal heavens with bashful  
smile.

My page, moor here the boat, where closely braiden,  
Those pliant branches screen the sacred isle.  
Wilt thou stay here, alone with the still night ?  
Those eyes of thine may throw some clearer light  
On these stone images, these symbols gray.  
Thou wouldst go with thy king : then come this  
way."

'Tis thus that Hadrian, poet, king and sage,  
Talks on the sacred river with his page.

A boat comes slowly forward in the light  
Of the ascending moon. Its prow is white,  
And like an ibis, with outspreading wings ;  
A low and solemn melody it brings.  
Upon the deck is group'd a mourning band  
Of white-robed maidens ; with veil'd looks they stand  
And drooping forms ; and as they step aside,  
A shrine appears, that death has sanctified :  
And o'er the darkening wave is borne along  
The burden of a chanted funeral song.

“Poor captive ! was thy cell so dark and dreary,  
And was thy prison’d wing so bruised and weary  
With long, vain efforts to behold the sky,  
That thou must sink to the dull earth and die ?  
The sunshine and the blue beyond, though far,  
Were they not nearer then, than now they are ?

“Poor, restless suppliant for some far heaven !  
See what at last for thy proud aim is given :  
The cold, damp, earthly odour of the tomb,  
The heavy, hanging walls, the clinging gloom.  
O thou may’st struggle now and vainly cry,  
And beat thy breast in hopeless agony !

“No, no ! our boat its moonlit way is winging,  
And lovers by the silent dead are singing.  
Dark is the wave and heavy is the tomb,  
But the white bird is touch’d not by the gloom.  
The Soul, O wonderful, immortal thing !  
Has left its early grave on new-plumed wing.”

The funeral boat draws nearer to the shore  
Beside the grove of palms ; and from the deep,  
Kind hands take up the burthen that it bore,  
The shrine, and the pale form that lies thereon,  
So calmly resting in her long, last sleep.  
To Hadrian, in the moonlight, she seems one  
Sculptured already into marble saint,  
For all to reverence,—those without taint,  
And even the erring,—for her purity,—  
For so fair type of what all yet would be.  
To one, she seems not dead or marble saint :  
The page sees the young priestess who had sung  
At the moon's festival, scarcely more pale  
Than she had seem'd behind the silver veil ;  
And then, as now, something unearthly flung  
A strange grace o'er her. She had been that night  
Seen but a moment in uncertain light ;  
Yet purer than the shrine ; nearer to bless,  
Than seem'd to him its boasted holiness.  
Now he would speak, but a grave priest is there ;  
And her pale hands the Christian's symbol bear.

From her new friends so soon had Thea died,  
The hermit's daughter only by her side.  
But Philæ's priests had sought her, and would bear  
The priestess of great Isis, to be laid  
Beside her sisters in the Temple's shade.  
The hermit cared not they should take away  
To her old home that lovely thing of clay ;  
For he said humbly, "'Twas our help that gave  
To gentle Thea hope beyond the grave."



TITIAN AND VIOLANTE.



## TITIAN AND VIOLANTE.

—oo—

### VIOLANTE TO TITIAN.

—

BEHOLD the message thou didst send :

“O Viola, most beautiful,

Come, while the moon is at the full,

To the still garden of thy friend.”

Most honour'd Master ! by that night,

When thou, within thy moonlit bower,

Didst call me “Italy's first flower,”

And by that moon so full and bright,—

By the pure faith that seem'd to be

In all so fondly said that eve,—

By all thou madest me believe,

Be true, I pray, to answer me.

Three moons have waned and fill'd again  
Since we two met ; then why thus write  
To Palma's daughter, Come to-night,  
Nor ask her pleasure or her pain ?

I know thy greatness : when news came  
From Augsburg—"Titian, it is well  
That Caesar serve thee !"—need I tell  
How Venice triumph'd in thy fame ?

A noble thought, when fitly said,  
Ennobles many souls ; and we  
Were not unworthy even of thee,  
When the good emperor's words were read.

Thy answer Venice treasures still,—  
When Leo wrote : "I pray thee come,  
That Art may wed with Faith in Rome :"—  
*"My heart can only rule my will."*

Nay, I forget not thou art great ;  
The consecrating hand of Time  
Has crown'd thee with a golden prime ;  
And led thee to so high estate,

I well may tremble, lest the love  
Upspringing in that soul of thine  
Be of *thy* spirit's life, not mine :  
And this long silence,—does it prove,

That I might pass away, and leave  
Thy perfect life as perfect then ?  
This seems to be the love of men,  
A restless ardour to achieve,

Till conquest makes repose as sweet,  
As it is heedless of its source,  
And ready in its facile course  
To embrace whatever it may meet :

For it is said, thou hast not known  
Thy glorious power till now, or seen  
A form and face in which has been  
Some rarer soul than we can own.

Three pictures painted by thy hand  
Of the same glorious form and face,  
Yet each one different in its grace,  
Have charm'd our beauty-loving land.

Now I can almost see thee smile,  
And hear thee say, *O jealous one !*  
*If Titian work for Art alone,*  
*Will not his heart grow cold the while ?*

I am not jealous : 'tis our pride  
That Italy's fair dames should be  
Immortalized because of thee ;  
Thus valued more than all beside.

How often I have sought the hall  
Of that fair palace of delights  
That crowns Urbino's rugged heights,  
To see thy picture, on the wall,

Of duke Francesco's Eleonore !  
I heeded not the draperies  
Of woven gold and rainbow dyes,  
Or those chaste vases, or the lore

Of nations, and our nation's boast,  
Bound by the lavish duke in gold  
And gems, quite wondrous to behold  
About so grave and still a host.

Of the wise lady Isabelle,  
Who moves like a pure, centering star,  
Where many brilliant planets are,  
Whose virtues poets sing so well,—

Whose various, antemundane lore,  
And rich antiques and relics rare,  
Make her of matrons model fair,—  
I like thy painting even more.

Yet why thy half-creative hand  
E'er made Ferrara's bride so fair,  
And gave her that pure, gracious air,  
I never yet could understand.

I speak not of the young Irene,—  
Three Muses on the earth again,  
And in one form reveal'd to men,  
As tender maiden of eighteen !

The wisdom of the past supplies  
No prototype of aught so strange ;  
Nature has limit to its range,  
And Art mocks not our sympathies.

Things graver and of yesterday,  
Were I less young and better known,  
Or heart more brave or cold could own,  
It might be well for me to say.

Ah no ! I cannot go to thee ;  
Much would I bear from Palma's friend,  
From our great Painter ; but some end  
Even to an artist's loves must be.

Three pictures of one form and face,  
Wrought by the generous hand of love,—  
This surely is enough to prove  
That Viola is out of grace.

And I can go to thee no more ;  
That smiling flatterer, whose ways  
And subtle words could always raise  
Some jest where wisdom was before,

Must find a kindred mind in thee,  
To be thy honour'd guest and friend ;  
I need not fear lest I offend ;  
To you at least he is blame free.

Now pardon me my woman's tongue ;  
And for the portrait that they say  
Will crowd the Pitti courts to-day,  
Most rare whatever seen among,—

And for that glorious queen of flowers,  
Whose dainty bloom and violet eyes  
Seem kindred to the mysteries  
Of those frail things of sun and showers,—

And for that Danaë, we hear  
Will bring down golden showers once more,  
That great Angelo bent before,  
As something of a higher sphere,—

One picture paint for love and me,—  
Thou hast done much for fame and gold ;  
Let all who may this one behold,  
See how thy love inspireth thee.

Paint a small garden rich with flowers  
And sweetly-scented, drooping trees,  
That seem with every gentle breeze  
To form themselves to changing bowers.

And where the myrtle intertwines  
So closely with the orange groves,  
Just by the group of marble Loves,  
Let the moon's consecrating lines

Fall on a figure, whose raised hand  
Is drawing those close boughs apart ;  
Use all the marvels of thy art  
To make that form most truly grand.

Shew through the majesty of age,  
The soul with all its youthful fire,  
And blend the fervour of desire,  
With the completeness of the sage.

Thy likeness thou must paint me there,  
Thy wonderful, outlooking eyes,  
Thy noble, self-reposing guise,  
Thy hopeful and expectant air.

There too a listening maid must be,  
Not quite unworthy, though so young ;  
And happy, as if thou hadst sung,  
“*Sweet Viola ! I love but thee !*”

TITIAN AND VIOLANTE.

—oo—

TITIAN TO VIOLANTE.

—

The task thou gavest me is done ;  
And if my picture be to thee  
Grateful, as was thy task to me,  
All must be well, my lovely one !

My pencil was as true and free  
As the sweet impulse of my heart ;  
My song made musical each part,—  
“Sweet Viola ! I love but thee !”

So perfect is thy type, fair maid ;  
In thy young grace and wisdom now  
So perfect of that type art thou,  
I should but mar if I would aid

With the prerogative of man,  
Who, taking Nature by the hand,  
Would modify what she has plann'd,  
And add new graces to her plan ;

Or I might say, thou dost but look  
From the sharp angle of a mind  
Self-center'd, and thy sight must find  
A narrow compass from such nook.

Already hast thou half replied,—  
*From thy own vertex thou mayst gain*  
*A farther range along life's plane,*  
*And more direct, if not too wide.*

So thy sweet self henceforth shall be,  
With all its conscious loveliness,  
Its partial, craving love no less,  
Interpreter of all to me.

And I have read thy heart and mind  
With all the judgment of my age ;  
Do what thou wilt, the speaking page  
Declares thee perfect of thy kind.

The doubts that o'er our friendship move,  
Like cloudlets o'er the moon's fair face,  
I would not lose in changeless grace ;  
For they are shadows of thy love.

I would not have thy gentle wit  
Tried by the logic of the schools ;  
Their cold and so impartial rules  
Might make but woman's love of it.

And I will see no sophistry,  
No adulation, in thy praise ;  
And only pure Art-love to raise  
So much enlighten'd sympathy

With works of mine that are most true  
To Viola's fair, speaking face,  
And gentle though expressive grace,—  
My prophecy of what was due

To the ripe vision of full time.  
I prize thy maiden humour rare,  
That says, *most excellent and fair*  
*Is she whose soul is so sublime,*

*Men honour even more than love.*

For its sweet charge I now will try  
To give thy letter meet reply.  
Gay Arcetino need not move

Thy spirit more ; since bowers of mine  
No longer crown a laughing girl,  
In whose quick sense each costly pearl  
Of his rich fancy seem'd to shine

With worthier lustre, he has been  
Of royal courts the ruling star.  
Such lights I know are better far  
Temper'd by some more steady sheen.

Thou sayest there must be some end  
Even to an artist's loves : I ask,  
How could the sun perform his task  
Before the expecting world, my friend,

If each light-laden, painted ray  
Kept its own hue, and would not spare  
Aught for its sisters, or yet share  
The mingling radiance of day ?

Does the fresh violet hide and pine,  
And its own sweetness all consume,—  
Does it refuse to breathe and bloom,  
Because the generous sun will shine

On the white lily by its side,  
And give such glory to the rose ?  
The little, happy violet knows  
What memories in its bosom hide.

If ever Love, that should be free  
Of God's whole earth, folds up its wings,  
And in its lonely corner sings,  
"Alas, my longing heart, for me !"

Well may it sing, *Alas for me !*  
Even like the sun thy love must glow ;  
And all the lovely things you know  
Must light their ready lamps from thee.

Oft at the story thou hast smiled,  
How my young, eager hands would grasp  
The loveliest flowers in fatal clasp ;  
How patiently the Artist-child

Press'd from the flower-cells magic dyes,  
That he might write his little word  
Of beauty, where all seen or heard  
Was beautiful, in fittest guise.

Now shame upon my froward tongue !  
'Twas for my portrait thou didst ask ;  
And I, by virtue of my task,  
Must sing of days when I was young.

And shame upon my wayward strain,  
That even now my faith belies !  
I might have stoop'd to egotize,  
If I had ask'd thy love in vain.

Three years ago it was well said,  
"Titian has rounded man's estate,  
And tenderly the hand of fate  
Pours gifts and honours on his head."

Three years ago ! and still my sun  
As radiant and as stately seems,  
And still we see its glowing beams  
High poised above my Gideon.

How should the artist's sun decline,  
So long as its clear, vital urn  
Has light and love in quick return,  
From beauty and from love like thine ?

An age of longing, reverent toil,  
That I might write my little word  
In the rich book of Nature's lord,—  
Then beauty such as thine, for foil,

That I so fairly read might be ;  
Such answer to my life-long quest,—  
Thou wouldst not have me idly rest  
Before the vision granted me.

Three years ago, old Palma said :

“My picture waits the Master’s eye

In the Vienna gallery.”

A daughter’s tender pride had led

Thee thither ; and we stood before

That picture, *Palma’s Household Flowers* ;

And these enchanted souls of ours

Fed on the painting,—and no more ?

’Tis said three lovely forms are there ;

To me one maiden form and face

Seem’d breathing in the glowing space,

With violet eyes and long, fair hair.

And when at last I turn’d away,

Still the same eyes look’d into mine :

How each soft tint and gracious line

Have ruled me since, why should I say ?

For love doth no sweet fancy fold ;  
But with a ready prescience speeds  
To blossom into lovely deeds,  
And rests not until all is told.

Nor will it ever cease to be  
The angel of our loftiest mood,  
Nor fail to make us understood  
In fittest mode and harmony.

Sweet Viola ! I could but stand  
Before the spirit of our love,  
And meekly to its guidance move,  
With pencil in my ready hand.

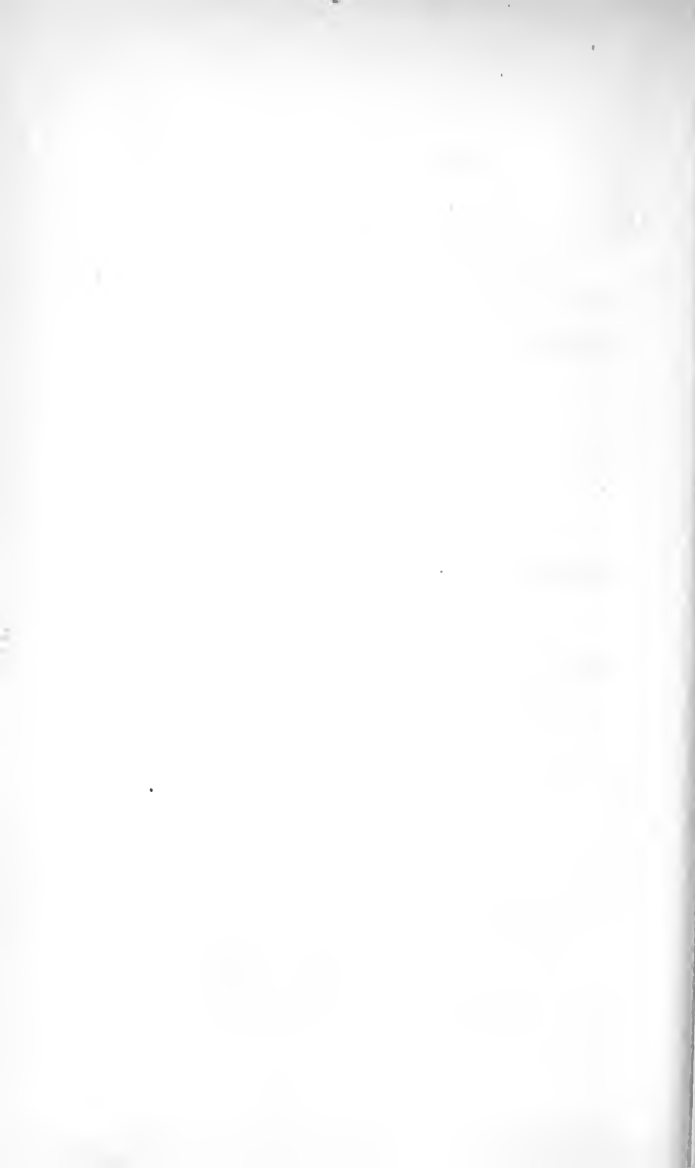
And my first work of love has been,  
'Mid Art's most costly gems to set  
Old Palma's lovely Violet  
As Art's most gracious, courtly queen.

And still my angel whisper'd me,  
    " If it be glorious to fill  
    The throne of Art,—with Nature, still  
Nobler regality must be."

So then I wreath'd my queen with flowers,  
    And gave her those blue, hopeful eyes,  
    And that fresh grace, so like the skies  
That smile between soft April showers.

And still my angel whisper'd me,  
    " Of the rich love thou bearest her,  
    Be for the once interpreter ;"  
And so I painted Danaë.

And every time before the shrine  
    Of Viola I came,—and now,  
    Wilt thou not let me tell thee how  
My beauties fail to rival thine ?



THE  
TRENCH OF TSORSZ.



## THE TRENCH OF TSORSZ.

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### I.

#### The Lovers.

#### TSORSZ.

MAIDEN, standing in the folding noontide,

Blushing 'neath thy veil of golden hair,

All so purely beautiful about thee,

That to call thee mine I scarcely dare,—

Art thou mine? or goddess of the noontide,

Spreading love's sweet raptures far and wide,

O'er the grassy lea and swelling corn-fields,

And the Danube's full and trembling tide?

Whisperest thou a tender heart's misgivings  
Lest the warrior think not of his bride ?  
First of victory's triumphs he will prize thee,—  
Ay, though foil'd, before his wounded pride.

Meeting bravely any fate of Heaven,—  
Sometimes lying in a purple cloud,  
Sometimes blending in a golden sun-mist,  
Sometimes hidden by a cold, white shroud,—

Then so sharp and clear their rugged outline,  
Those old hills for ever are the same.  
Heart of mine can change not, though the future  
Spread as radiant bliss or darkening shame.

DELIBABA.

Earth is resting in the folding noontide,  
Even the joyous birds have ceased their song ;  
Western breezes, with fair promise laden,  
Whisper'd promise, softly sweep along.

Some fair messenger from life's bright heaven  
Fills with strange delight this heart of mine ;  
Fears and hopes and wishes all are silent,  
All forgotten but those words of thine.

Dost thou hear the murmur of the corn-fields ?  
'Tis their answer to the welcome wind ;  
Strains of soft and dream-like music linger  
With the joy its promise leaves behind.

Thou must go ; my father will await thee ;  
Warriors need this hand, so gentle now :  
Often I shall meet in this white temple  
Memories, ever sweet, of thy love-vow.

---

Thus, upon the green shores of the Danube,  
Lovers to their happy present cling ;  
Once more Love's oft-told and simple burden,  
Ever new and beautiful, they sing.

Standing in the sun's glad light together,  
Love's glad sunlight ; one, with fair, young face  
And high mien, is Princess of the Lombards,—  
A pure, noble maiden by her grace.

Though of long descent and lineage royal,  
Delibaba wears no royal sign ;  
Gold and velvet, broidery and jewels,  
Are no mark of regal Lombard line.

In the tented field, in hall or bower,  
'Mid her sire's rude warriors she has been,  
By her gracious beauty and fair goodness,  
Always revered as the nation's queen.

He who stands beside her is a hero,  
Greater far in war than song erewhile ;  
Tsorsz, the monarch of the warlike Avars,  
Vanquish'd only by a maiden's smile.

And the trysting-place the pair have chosen,  
In the consciousness that love inspires  
Of its sacred meaning, is a Temple,  
Where once glow'd love's consecrated fires.

One white marble statue, 'mid the ruins,  
Eloquent of love and beauty still,  
Breathes of true and noble thoughts that, utter'd,  
Have a lasting destiny to fill.

From the peopled hollow comes the signal ;  
'Tis the martial Lombard's battle-horn.  
Linger yet, fond lover and proud hero ;  
For the wind amongst the ripening corn,

Wooing wind, unseen but ardent wooer,  
Makes clear music from those shining reeds ;  
Well thou knowest the loud call to battle,—  
That might be the lizards 'mong the weeds.

Delibaba smiles, and yet her fingers  
Tremble, as she draws the boughs aside.  
Banded troops are gathering in the valley ;  
Go thou must, if thou wouldst have thy bride.

Last and fairest daughter of the Jotuns,  
Guarded by her nation and stern sire,—  
Tsorsz, thy heart is brave, unstain'd thy honour ;  
Yet thy soul was rash thus to aspire.

As the new-plumed eaglet leaves its cyrie  
With the promptings of its quick, young life,  
Tsorsz, true son of the time-honour'd Avar,  
Flies from love's soft rest to meet the strife.

Ah ! the sun fades from life's open heavens,  
Mists are gathering o'er life's lonely plain ;  
But the daughter of the old North heroes  
Keeps brave watch till all is fair again.

Hers the faith that lovers breathe, though waiting  
Through long dreariness,—the gentle creed,  
Holy Love through any fate shall follow,  
Safe and free, where the beloved may lead.

Draw the curtains of thy tent still closer,  
Trusting maiden, for thy promised prayer.  
Thou dost need no herald from the combat ;  
Sire and lover must be conquerors there.

And thou seest them,—the dreaded hero,  
With the silent lips and speaking eyes,  
Whose huge form and roughly-bearded visage  
Never quail'd but at thy baby cries ;

And that other one, so lithe and slender,  
With the pallid brow and long, dark hair,  
Only warded by thy silken fillet,  
And the charmed life he seems to bear.

Hark ! that is the signal of the triumph ;

Two such heroes, like a flood, made way ;

Comrades in the peril and the glory,

They must hold as one their festal day.

## THE TRENCH OF TSORSZ.

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### II.

#### The Quarrel.

##### TSORSZ.

Keep the booty, O large-handed warrior !

Help from Tsorsz has never yet been sold ;

And great Rad shall never hear his foemen

Boast that he must buy his friends with gold.

Ay, it was a well-fought strife, and boldly

My strong horsemen bore them in the fight ;

But they were not hired : strong as the whirlwind,

And as free, is the bold Avar's might.

Pour before the hosts the red libation !

We may hold the cup with clasped hands.

Rad is master still of fair Pannonia ;

Rad is conqueror of unmeasured lands.

Raise the victor's shrine by the glad Danube,

Make rich offering from its fertile plain,

Solemn feast before the god of battles,

To the honour of the glorious slain.

While our hands are join'd, my strong, brave neighbour,  
bour,

But to conquer shall our troops go forth ;

And old Rome shall be the nursing mother

Of the matchless heroes of the North.

Seal the covenant, Master of the Danube ;

Tsorsz, the Avar king, is no base churl ;

But he has a claim ;—thy crimson banner

Falls and rises by a gold-hair'd girl.

There were soft blue eyes beside this river,  
All too tearful to behold the strife :  
By this hand of mine, and by those heavens,  
That fair girl shall be the Avar's wife !

---

Delibaba, like a Lombard Princess,  
Sits with her companions on the plain,  
Like a tender-hearted, lovely maiden,  
Sorrowing for those in battle slain.

Like a noble-hearted, Christian maiden,  
Often with her women she has wrought,  
Mixing unguent from the Holy Island  
For the wounded heroes who had fought.

As a sunbeam in its silent blessing,  
All so pure wherever it may fall,  
She has been the one true grace and treasure  
In her sire's rude heart and ruder hall.

No young larch on the bleak Northern mountains  
Ever budded in a sterner air ;  
No young larch on mountain or in forest  
Ever grew more delicately fair.

She has seen her brave and handsome lover  
In the battle and the festive rite,  
And she thinks the broad breast of the Danube  
Never shew'd a braver, nobler knight.

Now she hears his vow, and sees the fervour  
Of his love light up his face,—and now  
Does the glow of the warm Southern summer  
Flush the Lombard maiden's cheek and brow.

White-arm'd Freila, sitting by her mistress,  
Looks up to her face with archest smile ;  
And the dark-eyed daughters of the vanquish'd  
Half forget how sad they were erewhile.

Rad, as great in council as in battle,  
Strides before his war-tent up and down ;  
Earth seems shaken by his strong, stern footsteps,  
And the maidens tremble at his frown.

As the solemn beating of the ocean  
Upon desolate Hval-Oen's strand,  
Whose deep bosom keeps its mighty secrets,  
Are his steps upon the conquer'd land.

RAD.

Tush ! what youth is this, with braided hair !  
What soft youth, so boastful and so pale !  
Southern suns have dwarf'd him, mind and body ;  
That smooth cheek ne'er felt the North sea's gale.

Southern wines and dainty-finger'd dishes,  
These have dwarf'd his body and his soul ;  
The soft, silken couch and golden goblet,  
For the war-club and the pine-wood bowl !

Wed the daughter of a Jotun hero,—  
By my sires ! it is a prating boy !  
The false Avar boast before the Lombard,  
And his crown but now the Roman's toy !

## TSORSZ.

Rad, false Rad ! false to thy trusty neighbour ;  
False to her whom with a tenderer care  
Thou dost love, because, thyself ungentle,  
Child of thine could be so purely fair !

Ah ! 'tis an old memory that chafes thee ;  
'Tis the state-craft of imperial Rome :  
In thy mind the past is rudely graven,  
And a shadow falls on all to come.

Thou rememberest the murder'd Ogors,  
And their chief, by Tula's water laid ;  
The survivors driven through hot deserts  
And close forests by the Turkish blade :

These were they, O Rad ! whom guarded river,  
Mountain-chains, or ocean, held not back ;  
Never vanquish'd, though their wounded footsteps  
Help'd the fierce pursuer on their track.

These were they, with dark and braided hair,  
With brave aspect and unquailing eye,  
Who in the Byzantine court as equals  
Claim'd their meed and promised courtesy.

These were they whom the voluptuous Roman  
Strove to fetter with a golden chain,  
With rich raiment and luxurious banquets,—  
Treacherous thraldom,—only tried in vain !

These were they whose camps did crest the Danube,  
Each one raised upon a nation's wreck ;  
These, the remnant from the blood-stain'd Tula,  
And the grasping Lombard's foil and check !

Unsubdued even in their haughty sorrow,  
Mightier in distress than some in fame !  
'Tis my boast that I too am an Avar,  
Though thou art jealous of that glorious name.

---

Like a rugged oak lopp'd of its branches,  
Left in memory of some by-gone time,  
'Mid May's budding limes and chestnuts standing,  
Its green age more vigorous than their prime,—

Rad, the giant hero, meets his comrade,  
Smiling with a grim, unkindly smile,  
With cold, scornful eyes ; and on his war-axe,  
Heavy for three men, he leans the while.

RAD.

Worthy son of the unconquer'd Ogor !  
Mighty Chagan ! thou shalt have thy prize ;  
But thy comrade in the strife and glory  
Has some terms on which his honour lies.

From the corn-sown banks of the Theiss river,  
On thy war-steed only canst thou come :  
If thou bear my child from the blue Danube,  
It shall be by water to thy home.

---

Prove your boasted power, Master of battles !  
Guard your crown ere by your love beguiled ;  
Heroes win not lightly ; when the rivers  
Meet in wedlock, you shall wed my child.

---

Tsorsz calls Bure, his strong and faithful war-horse,  
Then says calmly, We shall meet again,—  
Bows down lowly to the Lombard princess,  
And speeds thoughtfully across the plain.

## THE TRENCH OF TSORSZ.

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### III.

#### The Trench.

The stern victor has forgot his triumph,  
And the vanquish'd thinks not of the foe ;  
Broken lies the warrior's sword beside him,—  
Even the conqueror's head is lying low.

Softly sleep rude men and ruder monarch ;  
Softly over all the moonbeam creeps,  
Lighting with a fitful grace and pallor,  
All unheeded, each one as he sleeps.

Softly from her tent steals Delibaba,  
Folding cautiously the canvas screen,  
Sacred ever to the haughty Lombard,  
Tent and temple of his maiden queen.

O'er the sobb'd and beaten turf she hastens,  
By the Danube's still and smiling waves,  
Like a colourless and silent shadow,  
By the fallen soldiers' new-made graves.

Wherefore in the lonely gloom of midnight  
Does she seek again the ruin'd shrine ?  
Her own nation scorns the fane, the worship,  
All the hated Roman thinks divine.

Not, O not from thee, bright-footed goddess !  
As thy orb'd and radiant beauty first  
From the brooding bosom of the ocean  
Upon mortals' dazzled vision burst,

On Love's rosy dawn to ask thy blessing,  
Or a life's completed joy to lay  
Here before thee, and with tearful rapture  
Meed of gratitude for bliss to pay ;

Not in festive guise, with song or cymbal ;  
Yet no early votary ever came  
With a meeker soul, a prayer more fervent  
And more truly in Love's sacred name.

She, the idol of the strong North people,  
And their poets' never-tiring theme,  
The sweet fairy of the soft South summer,  
And the light of many a youthful dream,

Thus alone, and gazing through the darkness,  
With so desolate and haggard mien,  
And with eyes so heavy from long weeping,  
That were once the happiest ever seen ;

Her fair hair, dark with the dews of nightfall,—

She comes forth, because her burthen'd soul  
Can no longer brook another's presence,  
Or the curtain'd tent's so close control.

So her sad and troubled love has sent her

From her shelter forth into the gloom ;  
And that marble Temple in the darkness,  
That white statue mouldering in its tomb,

Once so fill'd with life, so rich in beauty,

Now forgotten, yet to her most fair,  
Whispers to her heart, so lone and wasting,  
And the wealth of love that still is there.

Hopelessly to gaze into the darkness,

Where she knows the Avar army lay ;  
Still, still looking towards the grove of alders,  
Tsorsz's home, full fifty leagues away ;

Night by night she comes,—and still no message,  
Not one sign for hope to rest upon,  
Has been given, since her angry lover  
From her sire's unworthy scorn had gone.

Look up, Lady ! look, the white-stemm'd alders  
Stand out plain and weird-like in the night ;  
Eastward, through their leafy branches glancing,  
Thou mayst see a torch's glimmering light.

Loose thy tightly-folded hands, and listen :  
Dost thou hear not how the midnight air  
Echoes drowsily a distant murmur ?  
Troops of eager workmen labour there.

Look again ! The groves of white-stemm'd alders  
Fall so fast before that unseen band :  
Hark ! that mighty axe is surely ringing,  
Wielded by a more than mortal hand.

What a glare of light from those pine-torches !

Hide thee quickly, or thy gold-hued hair  
And thy pale, young beauty will betray thee,  
All so lonely in the midnight there.

Once again the noontide sun is pouring  
Fervid rays across the Danube's breast ;  
Once again the far Carpathian mountains  
In a cloud of hazy splendour rest ;

And again within the ruin'd Temple  
Delibaba stands, and now alone :  
Wherefore then her happy, radiant beauty,  
Brighter even than the past had known ?

Why that look that fain would be all gladness,  
But for memories that will not fade,  
Sorrows that have given spirit-graces  
To the changes time has scarcely made ?

Why that trembling smile, that eager gesture,  
That fond, earnest gaze from tearful eyes ?  
Why the changeful flush of chasten'd rapture  
That on parted lip and warm cheek lies ?

Far as she can see down the rich valley,  
Stretching, widening, and still pressing near,  
A vast Trench the smooth, green turf has riven,—  
'Tis the Avar's work,—and Tsorsz is here !

'Tis the Avar's gold and purple standard  
That is floating on that new-made mound ;  
'Tis the Avar's army that is opening  
This wide Trench across the Lombard's ground.

'Tis the Avars' king the maiden watches,  
Mounted on great Bure, as white as snow,  
Cheering his brave men with voice and gesture,  
As he passes gaily to and fro.

And, prophetic in her eager gladness,  
Through the vale she sees bright waters gleam,—  
Sees the marriage of the Theiss and Danube  
In the flowing of that silver stream.

And, O crowning bliss ! she sees her lovèr  
In a bark upon the sparkling tide,  
Radiant in his youthful love and beauty ;  
And she too is sitting by his side.

Then a long and glorious future opens,  
Scene by scene, each fairer than the last ;  
While o'er all a full and fadeless glory  
From the paradise of Love is cast.

But a sudden gloom breaks on her vision ;  
Those old hills seem to be drawing near ;  
That white horse, and its dark, noble rider,  
Clearly defined in the stirr'd air appear.

With a quick, bright sword cleaving the mountains,  
With a thoughtless laugh, the great Storm-fiend  
Wings its way over the troubled heavens :  
Ah, how fearfully that last flash gleen'd !

Tsorsz, great monarch of the matchless Avars,  
Chosen lover of the Lombard queen !  
Bure, strong Bure, why sinking with thy rider ?  
Wherefore thus, O Tsorsz, thy guards between ?

Rise, O rise ! put back this cloud of hair ;  
Wipe away this mist that dims thy eyes ;  
Delibaba comes from the white Temple ;  
Wouldst thou greet her thus, proud Avar ? Rise !

---

Is this then the fondly hoped-for meeting,—  
This the hour for which those young hearts  
yearn'd,—  
This the end of labour and of longing,—  
All for which each ardent hope has burn'd ?

There is silence in the crowded valley,  
Solemn silence where such life has been ;  
And the Avar workmen and the Lombards  
Mingle gloomily upon the green.

Tsorsz, so great in war, so fair in honour,  
And so brave in love, is lying low,—  
Stricken in his wonderful love-service ;  
Never mortal hand thus laid him low.

Rad, once more the field lies clear before thee,—  
Thou wouldst have it so,—then why so still ?  
Is a rival's wish'd-for fall less welcome,  
When a higher Power has wrought him ill ?

Rad, invincible in fight and council,  
What has bow'd thy mighty spirit now ?  
Thousands that strong hand of thine has widow'd,  
Yet no sorrow darken'd thy stern brow.

Does a warrior's heart beat proudly, coldly,  
When the wail of grief is loud and wild,  
But to fail more quickly and completely  
At the cry of anguish from his child?

Clearly lies the field of fame before thee ;  
And thy daughter, she is all thy own :  
But the valley has a cold, strange aspect,  
And the river flows with dreary moan.

LINDA.



## LINDA.

---

THERE was a gentle whispering of trees,  
A sweet, primeval harmony of streams,  
A tender melody of birds and bees,  
A voice most delicate of flowers, like dreams  
Of twin-born children ; in the noon-tide beams  
A silent thought-communion, a dower  
Of beauty and of love, that always seems  
So freely kindred graces to outpour,  
When in the grateful shelter of an Indian bower,

After long, lonely travel, I was lying.

Through many a fragrant and luxuriant maze  
Of light-fringed blossoms, glancing forms were flying  
On pleasure's restless wings ; 'mid silvery rays  
And gilded anthers, twining stems and sprays,  
How free was life ! Before me were the trees  
Of India's royal woods, that well might raise  
Their glorious burthens high ; for never breeze  
Enfolded living boughs more richly graced than these.

Above, the jasmine and the champac flower  
Made a deep azure dome with stars beset ;  
And that ray'd creeper twined about the bower,  
Whose name all passions and all hopes has met.  
Some flowers in full bloom glow'd, while others let  
Their spicy odours sleep, until the night,  
With words of charm, should the stored sweetness get :  
The sea of gold circled my feet, and bright  
Rose-colour'd petals touch'd my cheek, frosted with  
white.

Awhile I lived their beauty, breathed their scent,  
And call'd them by the names we know so well,  
Names learn'd with thee of yore ; and fancy went  
On with their lovely lives, from buds that swell  
As with fresh hopes, to faded leaves that tell  
How soon we are out-wearied ; then afar  
I gazed, through mingling depths of star and bell,  
Where hung the airy vanda's living ear ;  
And then, thought ever wing'd to leave the things  
that are,

I seem'd to lose the earth, its sights and sounds,  
Its breathings of still life ; and of the past  
I thought half bitterly ; for in its rounds  
Time has not spared us ; and this grief, our last,  
Sad parting, was so heavy ; then came fast,  
Desponding fears that if my aim should fall  
And fail, so much would fall ; until hope cast  
Its unexpected influence ; when through all,  
I heard an Indian priest chant from his ordinal :

“Source and End of Life and Light ! all the mysteries of yore,  
All that is or that shall be, in thy being I adore,—  
Thine that does create, illumine, and absorb for evermore :

I invoke thee, glorious Sun ! I invoke thy power divine ;  
Light my wisdom from thy light, lead this soaring soul of mine ;  
Guide me, bear me by thy beams, nearer to the Holy Shrine !

Source and Issue of a god,—primal Source of deity,—  
Cradle of the Golden Birth ! I adore thy mystery,—  
Thine that does sustain, and grace with so wondrous power to be,—

I invoke thee, sacred Stream ! I invoke thy power divine !  
Let me rest upon thy strength ; lead this longing soul of mine ;  
Bear me by thy secret might onward to the Holy Shrine !”

There was a fervid reverence in the tone,  
As of a soul-subduing ecstasy ;  
And finding my retreat no longer lone,  
I drew aside the odorous boughs, to see  
Whence the voice came. A tremulous pippal tree,  
Dropping rich purple garlands all around,  
Half screen'd a reverend form, that seem'd to be  
That of an aged Brahmin. To the ground  
His snow-white robes descended, and his brow was  
bound

With a close wreath of that fine Indian grass,  
Whose consecrated flowers like jewels glow.  
His look was cold, as if no ray could pass  
The lines prescribed for the mind's uses ; though  
Before him knelt an Indian girl, whose low,  
Sad voice just reach'd me ; I have never known  
One sadder or more lovely in her woe.  
I saw her face uplifted to his own,  
And thought her glowing land no sweeter face had  
shown.

Pleading before that rapt, regardless man,—  
    Meeting the languor of his downcast look  
With eager eyes, whose burning glance would scan  
    His hard indifference,—her light form shook  
    With ill-repress'd impatience, and she took  
His dull, dark hand to her own beating palm,  
    And strove to rouse him ; for she could not brook  
The silence and the cold, insensate calm,  
That chill'd her heart even more than did the sacred  
    psalm.

And then, in a low tone of wondrous sweetness,  
    I heard her pray as if for more than life :  
“I loved him not!” she said. “There was no meetness  
    In our brief union. ’Twas a bitter strife  
    To wed the one I loved not,—I so rife  
With a young, happy love ! O Brahmin, hear !  
    You know what means made me a weary wife,  
Means mighty only by my faith or fear :  
And can his spirit call mine to a living bier ?

I have a grievous tale of woe to tell,  
And thou art all my hope. One word from thee  
Might yet absolve,—one pardoning word might quell  
This fever in my bosom,—one word free  
The wife from her dread fate : then I could flee  
To the wild woods, and the beloved one  
Would seek my hiding-place, and life would be  
A bright, green bud, just opening in the sun,—  
The fresh, young flower it was, ere grief had thus  
begun.

Thou knowest all,—thou who hast always been  
My father and my spirit's only guide.  
Thou knowest how our tender hearts did lean  
Each on the other, and how side by side  
Our young twin lives were spent ; how thus allied,  
In all their crescent beauty, they must grow  
In an eternal oneness, and confide  
In this, the greatest bliss that they could know ;  
And thy approving look said that it should be so.

Why my young lover left me,—why erewhile  
One so unlovely came, whose tenderest tone  
Was harsher than his silence, and whose smile  
Was a strange presence, I was bound to own  
When I would fain have felt I was alone,  
I never knew ; and why my father, thou,  
Unmindful of my grief and wearying moan,  
Smiled on the stranger, and with heartless vow  
Bound Linda by a Brahmin's oath, I know not  
now.

I loved the earth and every living thing,  
The opening and the closing of each day ;  
And Him, the great Unknown ; though I could bring  
No calm, impassive soul to meet the ray  
That is all warmth and gladness. Not as they  
Whom time has taught and wisdom sanctified,  
Did my untutor'd heart its tribute pay :  
Like the rose-lotus blooming by thy side,  
That yields perfume for life and fears no evil-tide,—

Like birds that breathe the glorious air of heaven,  
And fill the heavens with song,—like birds that sing  
In trust unfailing, because life is given,  
I lived my love and praise ; and now I cling——”  
“Stay !” cried the seer ; “such worldly faith can  
bring  
Thy soul short way to bliss. Thou know’st that we  
From the still, universal Spirit spring ;  
And as we conquer life, that we shall be,  
Through circling ages, one with His infinity.

The soul that lives within its worthless home,  
That pines in alien thralldom to be free,  
To mingle with the light whence it did come,  
Is yet far from its source. ’Tis fate’s decree ;  
Through the red flames the gods will hasten thee,  
Even to the tranquil glory of the blest.

Oblivion’s sacred calm thy shadow be !  
Go, Linda, now, and meet thy high behest,  
And win by one brief strife thy everlasting rest.”

Still for exemption did poor Linda plead,

Despair's precocious wisdom in her eye.

The heart, self-love has seal'd, can never bleed,

Or he had yielded to that woful cry :

"Alas, I am so young, so young to die !

The ice-god's breath has not yet touch'd my cheek ;

From his drear home against the northern sky,

No snow has fallen my dark locks to streak,

No harsh and icy hand has made my young life weak.

Ah ! I would live for beauty and for love ;

The cup I tasted once, and found it sweet,

And I would drink till all my pulses move

To life's full, glorious music." "Wouldst thou  
greet

So sacred guests in that vile garb, and meet

The attributes of Him whom but to name

Should seal thy lips for ever, incomplete

His one slight mandate, whereby thou mightst claim

Eternal, sole communion without fail or aim ?

Break now the casket, and the prison'd gem  
Shall mate itself with love and beauty. Spurn  
The idle fears, the restless doubts of them  
Who here would linger. Linda, never turn  
To the old darkness ; let thy spirit yearn  
For its true counterpart, the only Light,  
The perfect Love. Thou hast not now to learn  
How He in whom the ages meet, whose might  
Is the responsive breath of beings infinite,  
.  
In the first Eld, from out their native sphere,  
The pure, the passionless, the high serene,  
Bade all the souls of men on earth appear,  
And leave the luminous for things terrene ;  
While to their eyes each unfamiliar scene  
Was worthless all, each heaven-accustomed one  
Fill'd with strange sense ; until He did convene  
The scatter'd souls, and with celestial tone  
That vibrates still for each, ask'd, 'Is thy life  
alone ?

Art thou not with thy Lord? Ah, Linda! now

Thy soul is echoing the answer; still

Even thou art conscious of the primal vow,

And thou must bend in all things to His will.

The faint and fleeting semblances that fill

This vast earth-picture, were not meant to hide,

But to reveal the Artist's mind; until

Thy memory casts earthly aids aside,

And One, the All-in-all, claims thee, a spirit-bride.

O Love! fair primal excellence, whose power

Holds Nature in glad thralldom,—bond most sweet

Between the human and Divine,—rare dower,

Whose various blessings in one life may meet,—

Sole, speaking grace, that those of earth can  
greet,

And say, it is of Him, to mortals given,

With beauty and with purity replete,—

Fine, viewless spark,—the soul's celestial heaven,—

The tear the spirit sheds for its remember'd Heaven!

Thine is a glorious destiny, fair Soul :

For one brief day life's cares have lightly press'd  
About thy brow ; and now the aureole

Of the young martyr waits thee. On thy breast

Those white, immortal wings short time did rest  
Beneath their crust of earth ; now they shall rise

Fresh plumed and strong to meet their bright  
acquest,

To greet new life and light beyond the skies,

Free from all mortal taint, free from all human ties.

Ah, my bright Lotus ! I have watch'd thy bloom

From its first germ to this its perfect day.

Those glowing leaves must wither in their tomb,

But the flower's life shall only pass away,

To bloom in fairer seasons and for aye ;

No blight shall injure and no age destroy ;

And we shall meet, when I am called to lay

All burthen down ; no trial, no alloy,

No canker of the heart shall interrupt our joy.

For youth and age must meet ; the unsullied page

That passion has not stain'd, nor vain desire,  
Nor burning fancies scer'd, shall fold with age.

The letter'd surface, whiten'd by the fire  
Of trial, may with purity conspire ;  
For wisdom's highest and its best estate,  
Its recompence and end, can but acquire  
The child's mute trust, its heedlessness of fate,  
And the still, dream-like bliss such being will create.

Even now I feel the reflex of that time,

Time that no lapse can lessen. Calm and still  
As those vast hills, whose nature is sublime

In immobility, fearing no ill,  
And trusting in the bounty that must fill  
All things by Goodness given,—like them I rest ;  
The snow that Fate will scatter lying chill  
Upon my head,—Life's troubled billows press'd  
About my heedless feet,—Heaven's sunshine on my  
breast.

Linda, look up ! Those rosy clouds of light  
That float so softly through the deepening sky,  
Full of rare virtues and serenely bright,  
Wait but the fiat to dissolve and die,  
Mingle unseen and everlastingly  
With Nature's changing life ; so shall thy soul  
Rest 'mid the splendours of Infinity,  
Mirror the rose-like radiance of its goal,  
Then lose itself for aye in the resplendent whole."

Linda replied not ; but I saw her face  
Vary with timid feeling at the name  
Of that mysterious love. There was the trace  
Of something more than fear ; her colour came  
And waned again, more like the flush of shame  
Than that a young enthusiast might bear ;  
And as I watch'd her downcast look, the same  
Dark, conscious trouble seem'd to settle there.  
Ah ! the young, earthly love had more than mortal  
share !

The sage talk'd on, and now she heard him not ;  
Those eyes in which the fervour of the East  
Seem'd centering in a deep and lustrous spot,  
Look'd upon nothing real ; but her breast  
Was not so void ; one longing thought at least  
Fell humanly ; with the young love to die,  
Her youth's all-hallow'd love, were not unblest ;  
Then as twin spirits they might rise on high,  
And so united know a blissful destiny.

Forth from my leafy resting-place I broke,  
To prove the Brahmin's faith both false and dead ;  
But he was gone ; and so I softly spoke  
Of our own simple faith ; and when I said  
God never will'd the sacrifice that led  
To human misery and wrong, the tone  
Made Linda weep ; but when the sense she read,  
Some influence that seem'd beyond our own  
Breathed peace, and through her grief a ray of comfort shone.

She seem'd to know me for a trusty friend ;

Thank Heaven ! the high credentials that I bear  
Fail not, but ever to my efforts lend

Some welcome grace, gladly accepted where  
Are truth and innocence. So sitting there,  
The Indian girl told all her young life o'er,—  
How she had always loved ; how fresh and  
fair

Was life with her young lover ; how before  
That fatal wedded year, a holy Brahmin bore

The burthen of her youth ; that he had given  
To an old man the young, reluctant wife,  
With threats and promises that seem'd of Heaven ,  
That she had lived one year of wedded life  
So sadly, though through all one only strife  
Had been between them ; she had tried to love  
Her wifely duty ; and the heart so rife  
With living, loving memories, she strove  
To teach forgetfulness, and in its present move.

And she had loved, as pure and faithful ones

Love those who need their ministry. He died :

A trembling earnestness was in her tones,

As with a timid, questioning look, she cried,

“He who is dead oft bade me seek your tribe.

He said, before your holy Prophet’s prayer

The red suttee in very shame would hide ;

And I had sought you, but the Brahmin there——”

She paused, for words like these came on the willing  
air :

“Where art thou ? My long-loved, my spirit’s sister,

The wild woods’ joy, their glad familiar one,

The weeping flowers’ beloved and gentle lover,

My so long silent friend, where art thou gone ?

The morn, thy birth-morn, came to woo thee early,

To meet its own with tender blush and smile ;

I saw its bright, expectant beauty fading,

And it has wept with me a weary while.

Bright spirit ! shining now so far above me,  
I've waited long within our childhood's bower,  
A dark-hued Patali, with leafless branches,  
Stripp'd of its delicate and fond moon-flower.

To-night I wander'd by the sacred river,  
Where the blest rain-flower clasp'd the milk-plant  
fair ;  
I closed my arms over my yearning bosom,  
And thou, its hope, its promise, wast not there."

"He has not then forgotten," Linda said,  
As the last accents of her lover's song  
Linger'd so near the bower. When I had led  
By gentle reasoning her thoughts along  
The truths that make our faith so fair and strong  
For all life's needs, staying till she had seen  
How good and lovely is our life among  
The living whom it blesses,—that between  
God and his silent ones no power can intervene,—

I thought to seek her lover, to devise

How to save Linda from the dread suttee ;

But she said sadly, that the Brahmin's eyes

All-seeing were ; she knew she could not flee ;

He was not far even then ; nay, she must be

The victim that his cruel faith desires.

'Twas then his stately form confronted me ;

And though most sacred truth our faith inspires,—

And though my tongue seem'd touch'd by Heaven's  
eternal fires,—

And though until the evening I held

Close, pleading converse on our hallow'd lore,

I could not save poor Linda ; men had quell'd

All heart within them ; so at night they bore

The young wife to the funeral pyre ; but more

Than crowd dismay'd or fear of pain oppress'd,

I comforted ; and when the red glare tore

The dusky presence of the night, I press'd

Before the lurid tomb, and the dark crowd address'd :

“Your fires are kindled for this gentle one ;

Ah ! even now the glow is on her hair ; .

The tender, hopeful soul that ever shone

Through those pure eyes, is quench'd not by the  
glare.

You hear no cry of terror or despair.

But think not India's faith has conquer'd doom.

No unembodied essence triumphs there :

The living love and hope you would entomb

Are of a higher faith, and in its heaven have room.”

I did not hope to change their dread design ;

No alien power could lead them to forego

An immolation they believed divine.

But a dark crowd was gathering below,

Preparing for their great sacrifice show ;

And could I draw their cruel thoughts aside,

That they might add not to the fire's red glow,

Until the rite commenced that would divide

The throng, some help might come ; and so I loudly  
cried :

“There is a fatal error in your creed ;

Life was not given your poor, dark souls to draw  
And wreck in cold oblivion ; but to feed

Each aspiration from the eternal law

Of love, that has no limit and no flaw.

O proud yet fallen ones ! there was a time

In this young land of beauty, when men saw  
Through earth and spirit, in their change and prime,  
The ever-present tokens of that love sublime.

Your minds have revell'd in the idle lore

Of myths and fables. You have thought to fold  
The Infinite,—His wondrous ways explore

With finite vision. You would here behold

His attributes and purposes enroll'd  
In His creation ; and you could not span

His being and His methods. Still untold  
Is Nature's secret ; still no mortal can  
Withdraw the veil that hides the things of God from  
man.

I cannot spare yon grand and mighty pile,—

A nation's tribute to a nation's creed.

Those red, deriding flames seem now to smile

Upon its weird appointments, as to feed

A fierce disdain before they upward speed.

And so your cruel faith shall have in time

From the wide world its satire, and its need

Of burning scorn. These idols, though sublime,

Supreme indeed in folly, symbols of the prime

Of earth's refined illusions, yet shall be

Low, with your creed and worship." While I  
spoke—

My spirit warning with sure prophecy,

And my voice ringing through the cymbal's stroke—

From the fanatic throng a loud cry broke.

The doors of the vast building open'd wide,

And a black chariot issued ; to their yoke

Four untamed horses, ebony hued, were tied,

And keen and glittering weapons hung from either  
side.

Down the wide courts they sped, all black as night,  
Past the colossal shapes that flank'd the way  
On either side in so assuming might.

With its imperious but unconscious sway,  
In speechless pomp and horrible array,  
The car bore its dread burthen ; the strange thing  
Shone in the fitful flashes ; on to slay,  
On through the shrieking crowd, onward to bring  
Death, thrice slain and unpitying, where those wheels  
should ring.

Still on it came, as faithful to the one

Whose dread, unnatural image seem'd to guide.  
One moment the relentless weapons shone,  
And then all hope was vain. On every side  
The path to sure destruction open'd wide.  
Some, timid, strove to flee,—the trampled mire  
Drank the life-blood of those who, self-slain, diel,  
Meet offering to their god. From Linda's pyre  
The crowd slowly withdrew ; for now but one desire,

That I should be borne down, seem'd to impel  
The steeds, by hidden power. Now to the glave  
Another and another ! “Gabriel !”

A voice cried near me,—“hasten, fly to save,—  
Save Linda from that dreadful, fiery grave !”

I and her lover from the loath pile tore

The glowing brands, whose hissing fury drave  
Back the bewilder'd throng ; and then we bore  
Our Linda from the fire in safety to the shore.



# EARNEST.



## EARNEST.

---

LIFE is short, the Book is preaching,  
Brief its sorrow and its joy ;  
Art is long, the World is teaching,  
And may all of life employ.

We were weary, I and Earnest,  
Of the city and its strife,—  
Of its never-resting shadows,  
And its ever-busy life.

So we left it one bright morning,  
For a near and pleasant place,—  
An old palace, wood-embower'd,  
Built long since with regal grace.

And our spirits grew and lighten'd  
In the order all around,  
As birds live in gladdest freedom  
By the yielding ether bound.

I and Earnest loved each other,  
As loved Naomi and Ruth ;  
Each to each was more than brother,  
In our tenderness and truth.

He, an artist, nurtured proudly  
In all fine and tutor'd lines,  
Moved but in the welcome thralldom  
That both strengthens and refines ;

While to me the fair proportions  
That the laws of Art provide,  
Were impalpable as shadows  
On a sunny, green hill's side.

But I own'd a life right royal,  
Never far from Beauty's train,  
Whether queenly court were holden  
On the trackless, sylvan plain,

To the streamlet's silvery music,  
And the wild bird's gushing strain ;  
Or where sovereign pomp and presence  
Proved an universal reign ;

Whether crown'd in stately manner  
With heaven's grand, reflective lights ;  
Or by mighty voice of tempests  
Publishing imperial rights ;

Whether Beauty, soft and glowing,  
On a maiden's cheek might rest ;  
Or I traced it in the worship  
That my Earnest's eyes express'd ;—

There, as in a written volume,  
I could read his soul's desires,—  
How the lamp of genius nurtures  
Its eternal, restless fires.

As through many a stately chamber,  
Stately in their pictured pride,  
He and I in silent homage  
Wander'd slowly side by side,

Now and then a sigh or murmur  
Told the fulness of his heart,  
As the strong life of the spring-tide  
Bursts the answering buds apart.

He would tread the earth more firmly,  
And his radiant face upraise,  
And for man's exceeding greatness  
Utter thoughts of fervid praise.

While my heart was well-nigh dying,  
Burthen'd by its own excess,  
Genius in its hour of greatness  
Seem'd to bruise instead of bless.

So we gazed, each in his humour,  
On the richly laden walls,  
Until evening's glowing humour  
Glanced across the ancient halls.

Beauty grants a goodly guerdon,  
But it wakens new desire ;  
And the artist's life is quicken'd  
But to labour and aspire.

Often as the summer deepen'd,  
    We were bending at our shrine ;  
Earnest wrought at his ideal,  
    But I only honour'd mine.

I had look'd almost to worship  
    On the virgin Mother's face ;  
Not the enraptured Queen of Heaven,  
    Veil'd by superhuman grace :

I had found a true Madonna,  
    Of a Mother's love the type,  
With the woes of earth upon her,  
    With its varied sorrows ripe.

Its sad human look had moved me,  
    There was grief on Mary's brow,—  
And that Mother's holy sorrow  
    Has its tender interest now.

Moulded as incarnate Beauty,  
Full and flowing, free and fair,  
Matron-grace contemning duty,—  
Earnest's type was painted there.

And he said : " Here, mighty Painter !  
As true artist thou hast wrought,  
Even this bright form is fainter  
Than the all-pervading thought.

Line with line is softly bending,  
And in vain we seek to trace  
Where the lineaments are blending,  
Whence the free and folding grace."

As I watch'd his willing canvas,  
Breathing daily fresher life,  
Much I marvell'd at his fancy,  
And the false Egyptian wife.

Round that fine old pictured palace  
Grassy plains and gardens lie ;  
There are vistas still extending  
To the well-accustom'd eye ;

And dark groves of veteran beech-trees  
Like a solemn priesthood stand,  
Giving to the earth their blessing,  
Each with kind, outspreading hand.

And beyond, where nature only  
Claims the culture and the needs,  
Lies a woody hollow, lonely,  
And bound in by tangled weeds.

Some hang forth their pale, green blossoms,  
Or their red or purple fruits,  
Filling air with heavy odours,  
And the fostering earth with roots.

There we sometimes sat together  
Till the noontide heat was past,  
As the glorious summer weather  
Took a grave, autumnal cast.

Once, by Earnest's movements shaken,  
Its ripe berries o'er his brow,  
A dark shadow on its whiteness,—  
Hung a slender, purple bough.

Like a very serpent, tempting  
Human heart with wisdom's pride ;  
Truly he who yields, exempting  
From all care or thought beside.

Of the plant's strange, tragic history,  
Some dark legend each could tell ;  
And we both agreed, its mystery  
Had a weird and wondrous spell.

Earnest told me how a sculptor  
Woo'd and won a maiden bright,  
How their day of bliss was ended  
By death's cold and rayless night,

How his broken spirit languished  
For some vision of his love,  
Yet unfading wreaths were gathering  
His pale artist-brow above.

Earnest knew that every summer,  
Heavy languor bow'd his head,  
And that pitying ones bent o'er him,  
Weeping, thinking he was dead ;

But that like a lily raising  
Its white blossoms after rain,  
With its gentle odours praising  
Heaven, for light and strength again,

So he rose, the storm-cloud over,  
    Never weary, though so still ;  
And some power we know not always,  
    Seem'd to guide him by its will.

Forms of rare device he moulded,  
    Human, yet divinely fair ;  
And those marvell'd who beheld them,  
    For no earth-thought linger'd there.

Thoughts and sympathies of Heaven  
    Seem'd to animate each breast ;  
They were like rare dreams of angels,  
    When all passions are at rest.

Then he rose no more ; and many  
    Whisper'd, with averted eye,  
Of the grievous sin that any  
    By his own rash deed should die.

“Yet he knew no sin,” said Earnest ;

“All the joy of life was gone,  
But an artist’s glorious visions ;  
And he fain would look upon

Those rare creatures, whose strange beauty  
Nature shews to those who read,  
And who trust her wondrous secrets,  
Though her medium be a weed.”

Then, the leafy roof above us,  
At our feet a murmuring rill,  
Earnest talk’d, as if communing  
With some memory, painful still :

“Once a fearful vision met me,  
Finer, quicker than a thought,  
Like a spirit-revelation,  
True as inspiration taught ;

I beheld a mighty Seeress,  
And my destiny she cast,  
Meting out the pathless future  
By the footprints of the past.

And I stood in coming ages,  
The same boundless, craving thing,  
That the past had fail'd to order,  
Or its satisfaction bring ;

This my doom, to be for ever  
Where the orbs of heaven are set,  
Past redemption, hoping never,  
And, O ! never to forget ;

Yet to live in conscious being,  
Knowing all things, good and ill,—  
Wisdom and the void around me,  
This poor, longing soul to fill !

Ah, that doom ! I hear the Sybil  
    Slowly measure forth each word :  
‘ But for knowledge thou hadst being,  
    Therefore hast thou darkly err’d.

Though thy lamp was burning brightly,  
    And thy life-cup running o’er,  
Yet no other knew the blessing  
    Of thy overflowing store.

Be thy wished-for good thy guerdon,  
    Be a star, with wisdom dight ;  
But thy orbit in the heavens  
    Shall bestow no ray of light.

Never upon earth, light-bearer,  
    Through the ages thou shalt roll,—  
Nothing holier, nothing fairer,  
    For thy still and rayless soul.’

Better than the outer darkness  
Was the bright though treacherous flame ;  
I, the poor and eager night-moth,  
Thither to my ruin came.

Even now I feel the shadow  
Of that surely coming doom ;  
I will brave the breaking tempest,  
Rather than this deepening gloom.

Earth must have the power to lighten  
Mystery as well as woe ;  
If my lot is out of Heaven,  
I must higher vision know."

Earnest's tone was low and mournful,  
And I listen'd sadly now ;  
Yet I knew not he had tasted  
Of the deadly poison bough.

All that night beside his pillow,  
Sad and hopeless watch I kept ;  
Then, alas ! for him, the gifted,  
And the early lost, I wept.

And I know not how his treason  
May have perill'd his poor soul,—  
How one passion blighted reason,—  
Why that one should be his dole :

But I mourn for human weakness.  
For the might of human pride :  
Had he borne his cup with meekness,  
Earnest would not thus have died.

ISOLINE.



## ISOLINE.

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### The Prophecy.

THE first love of youth, O beloved one ! once known,  
Has a life and a vision for ever its own ;  
And I read the past by those clear eyes of thine,  
And feel thy young joy o'er this being of mine,  
                    When 'twas taken at first  
From the still-flowing chalice, whose sides crystalline

The life-stream empurples. Love needs not the aid  
Of material agents ; the sign has been made  
In a world where the vision is kindred and clear,  
Where thought in its several completeness is near  
                    Its source and its end,  
And harmonious as hues in the rainbow appear.

So the past lies before me ; and thou art as bright  
As the flowers o'er which thou art bending ; and white  
Is thy long, drooping dress, and the matronly lace  
That half shades thy features ; I see the pure grace  
Of a joy yet untold,  
That makes still more tender thy delicate face.

Now I hear the fond secret : “ O flowers loved well,  
My laughing Blush-rose and my pale Asphodel !  
I can wait on your beautiful bloom for awhile,”—  
As she said it, the happy one blush'd with her smile,—  
“ But another is coming,  
No fleeting Grave-flower my thoughts to beguile ;

'Tis an Amaranth Bud ; and day after day,  
In Heaven's look it will blossom and ripen for aye.  
I shall see all its soft, flushing beauties uncloze,—  
I shall stand with the angels and watch its repose,  
And kiss off the tears  
That will lie on its cheek, as dew lies on a rose.

Warm, golden-hued sunbeam ! we stand in the glow  
Of a bliss most entire ; it is sweet to bestow,  
And to live on bestowments, we know it is sweet ;  
Thou art here in thy giving and taking complete ;  
And now for our being,  
Life's, Love's perfect issues as joyously meet.

Tender breeze ! you will fold all the sweets of the morn ;  
You will give of your sweetness ; when our one is born,  
Our hearts will enfold it ; and we will endow  
With every grace that doth rest with us now ;  
And pray, O how truly !  
That Heaven a holier meed will allow."

With the bright, hopeful summer the year moves on,  
The flowers and voice from the garden are gone ;  
But a new name is utter'd when loving ones pray,  
A new life is recorded ; and from that birth-day,  
'Tis in Heaven remember'd,  
And will be by Him who bestow'd it, for aye.

By the light of thy spirit I see thee again,  
The bright, pleasant room, and the shade on the pane  
Of the purple grape-cluster. Thou art not alone ;  
Thou hast scarcely a thought that unshared thou  
wilt own ;

There is one by the cradle  
Who smiles while thou sayest : "Two lives met in one !

Sweet Blossom of ours ! how the fair past has wrought,  
In its exquisite fitness, until it has brought  
This beautiful being, to live in the light  
Of our lives, thus immortal, through Love's bound-  
less might ;

And it will as surely  
For ever abide in the Holy One's sight.

Those blue, dreamy eyes some vision must own  
Concerning this being that we have outgrown ;  
Or, lying so weak in the outermost fold  
Of the robe of the Infinite, striving to hold,  
With soft, downy fingers,  
Life, vast for our living, would seem all too bold.

Yet the fair, yielding flower its germ doth o'erclose,  
And the seed of the tree in the breast of a rose  
Finds all things sufficing ; our little one lies  
Embracing its perfectness ; all that shall rise  
For the future to ripen,—  
The problems that vex and enlighten the wise.

Ah ! that look of grave happiness answers me well :  
My beloved, search deeply for wisdom, and tell  
How this life shall be nurtured, her future unroll  
From our hands under Heaven,—a beautiful whole,  
Unto earth a good angel,—  
For her God a receiving and separate soul.

Shall we make her a poet ? You say that the young  
By their youth are all poets ; their fair fancies strung  
Each one to its symbol, that whispers again  
Of a host of new meanings, all kindred and plain ;  
And their wide, equal love,  
To its own fond completeness does all things constrain.

But tell me, most wise one, if we should be wise  
To train those young fancies till they might arise  
To that standard of dignity, well-sustain'd thought  
In expression resulting? It seems this has brought  
    To us little glory,  
And often for trial most bitter has wrought.

The seer looks down from his excellent height  
With a conscious supremacy, noble and right,  
Whatever has made that proud station his own.  
For us it would be an unsanctified throne ;  
    We should be but usurpers,  
By efforts all lawless, and best left alone.

Should we deck a wild kid with a rare golden chain,  
And then let it go to its mountain again,  
Its own would disown it as some monstrous thing,  
And to see the new wonder some old playmate bring.  
    Would her heart not be lonely,  
If we were to teach the Child-poet to sing?

Ah ! it rests not with us that high promise to give ;  
He who makes His own poets will set each to live  
In a tralucent sphere, an obedient power,  
And therefore so certainly lord of the hour ;

Both gyre and giver,—

As the law that is rounding the drop on the flower,

The hues of the beautiful all meeting there,  
On genial rays borne with delicate care,  
A grace and a blessing whate'er may befall ;  
For the poet is lover and servant of all,

Changing ever, lost never,

Most tender in power and most potent in thrall.

Then let Love be our teaching. I read thy fond thought :  
You would ask, Is the lark's morning hymn by man  
taught ?

Has the Child's ardent spirit love's lesson to learn !  
Ere Woman can minister, has she to earn,

O most gracious knowledge !

An insight, her impulse and end to discern ?

To render true life from its seeming, to rise  
From the trance of her youth, to look out with calm  
          eyes,

Though seeing the tender enchantment that lay  
On her life, so sufficing, all passing away,

          And the warm, rosy future  
Dissolving in rain-mists that sadden the day ;—

To shrink not and fear not ; but all doubt above,  
To trust to the waste the white wings of her love,  
Assured it shall find some green shelter of rest,  
Nor forget to return to its ark in her breast,

          With the sign of its joy,  
If its own divine wisdom but guide in the quest,—

Must be our first lesson, and so we may nurse  
For a being so calm and entire, that the curse  
Of a selfish, complaining and purposeless care,  
So unblest in its grief, so unblest in its prayer,

          Because so alone,  
May never be known to her utter despair.

And God help our teaching ! for must we not show,  
Before the pure light of that soul, all the woe  
Of a failing and falling that she too must share ?  
The more earnest her striving and fervent her prayer,  
And the truer her good,  
The more bitter her tears, the more heavy her care !

So new from the hand of the Maker,—so bright  
With the sacrosanct kiss of the angels,—so white  
For the tool of the Graver ! O Great One ! decree  
That no line may be graven, that is not to be  
Approved in the reading,  
When the just have their portion allotted by Thee.”

---

All bearing a blessing, the seasons went past ;  
Each one with its grace-gifts more free than the last.  
The day's fair successes, the eve's earnest thought,  
And the work by the lamp-light to one purpose  
wrought,—

The calm, happy being  
Of the child so enshrined in the love she had brought.

It is spring in the meadows, and tiny feet stray,  
In the wake of the sunbeams, a bright, flowery way.  
Half hid by the blossoms the baby-girl stands :

“How sweetly our Bud ’mid the blossoms expands !”

Says the fond, happy Mother :

“But, O little prodigal ! look at her hands !

From the pink, tight-clasp’d fingers pale primroses  
peep ;

The violets scarcely their sweetness can keep.

Ah ! those clear, open eyes by their own light behold  
New mysteries brighten, new wonders unfold ;

And all the child’s visions

Are like the spring landscape, emblazon’d with gold.”

And does that new wisdom, thus ardent, discern  
The two tender watchers, who scarcely can turn  
From the blessing that charms ? From the hush’d,  
dreamy past

Of her still, infant life she is waking at last ;

As the bloom to the spring-tide,

Love, giving and taking, its glory has cast ;

And she lives in the blessing, though mystery lies  
In the deep, yearning tenderness seen in the eyes  
Of those who watch over ; she breathes to the tone,  
The sweet rhythmic tone, that yet falls from the one

Who looks up in loving :

“ We who share in the grace, and who are not alone,

In this life-dedication ; but each to respond  
To the other in serving ; while seeing how fond  
In the instinct of loving, how earnest to be,  
How eager in having, she is,—how shall we

Take heed the most worthy

Be also most lovely of all she shall see ?

We must fashion a fair pearly cup, to contain  
The rare sweets of knowledge ; to help us to gain  
A faith for the little one, hopes she may fill  
With most welcome certainties ; hill after hill,

By Truth's orient brighten'd,

Shall catch some new splendour and fuller height still.

We must guide with soft, reverent hand, from the  
source

Of many-streamed knowledge, and follow its course,  
Until ever increasing and brightening, as fed  
By a thousand in-flowings of truth, it has led  
To the infinite Wisdom,

On whose deeps the pure light of the heavens is shed.

Knowledge gives widest welcome ; most happy we stray  
With thought's fond familiars along the green way  
That nurtures the flowers we loved in our youth :  
Then, though poor be the best of our teaching, the ruth  
Of pitying spirits  
Shall not find her strange to the pathway of truth."

Her little, clasp'd hands pointing upwards, her brow  
So pure in the light of the evening glow,  
Her face so subdued in its beauty, her hair  
Smoothly braided, her rounded feet quiet and bare,  
'Neath her white, uniform'd dress,—  
The Child has foreshadow'd the Saint in her prayer.

In the soul of the parents, the still life of thought  
Opens into quick being ; and now they have sought  
The couch of their child ; warm and bless'd in her  
dreams,

As if with the kisses of angels, she seems :

And they, whispering by,  
Have crown'd her young life with a nimbus of beams.

They say, in the love-light of Heaven she lies,  
And visions of beauty sweep over her eyes ;  
That earth of its wisdom has yet set no sign  
Upon her young forehead ; that He, the Divine,  
Has faith in their guidance,  
Or would He a child to their teaching consign ?

She has pull'd the first rose-bud ; and here in the south,  
The blossoming sweets of her own rosy mouth,  
She has laid it to sleep. O happiness rare,  
Of all so unconscious that is not most fair !

O goodness, the better  
That all must the charm of its excellence share !

O glorious power of an infinite soul,  
So perfect in all its relations, world-whole,  
Though its earth and its heaven are bounded alone  
By the hush'd dreams of infancy, ready to own  
    Enough for the present,  
And to form a rich living from what is unknown !

## ISOLINE.

---

### *The Fulfilment.*

The child looking inward, and feeling that life  
With unfailing promise and blessing is rife,—  
Or outward, and seeing its destinies move  
In most gentle providence, therefore may prove  
    The rule of the Giver,  
As watchful in wisdom as boundless in love :

That the life of the creature, outgoing in quest,  
Upon Him who created might consciously rest ;  
That the sweet brooding peace falling everywhere,  
As sign of atonement, each bosom might bear,—  
    The soul of the Mother  
Bears its affluent wisdom and blessing and care.

The life of young Isoline thenceforth was wrought,  
A costly mosaic, with feeling and thought.

“O life is so truthful, and truth is so fair :

It is this happy faith gives such charm to her air,

Such gracious repose,—

The warmth to her heart and the voice to her prayer.

’Tis home love,” thinks the mother. “The eyes of  
our dove

Have told us a thousand fond stories of love.

As of old, a hush’d bird on my bosom she lies,

Looking up to the wonderful love of my eyes ;

I know her heart well,—

To me her young life not one feeling denies.

How thoughtful she looks as she sits by the brook,

Her small, child-like hands resting over her book !

The musical stream with its clear, winning tones,

As in glittering ripples it laves the bright stones

In its course from the uplands,

For the voice of the living and loving she owns.

It tells her how love, from the far and high past,  
Though diverse at first, must commingle at last ;  
That streams of delight and sweet promise descending  
So gaily, have calm household bliss for their ending ;  
That love, then and ever,  
To all it flows over a rare grace is lending.

Her life is a beautiful vale ; every slope  
In turn bears the radiant sunbeam of hope ;  
So many rare graces have blossom'd, and still  
Nature owns all the fairest ; while each friendly hill  
That shuts out the unknown,  
Is a sign of expectancies time shall fulfil.

'Tis a life that our tenderness thus has closed in,  
Kept green by the stream of love flowing within.  
Ah, Heaven ! nurse no storm for this sweet vale of  
ours,  
Breathe not on its rest by less delicate powers ;  
Let not thy sun scorch it ;  
But may it bloom ever a valley of flowers !"

Are the prayers of a mother prophetic ? A change  
Has pass'd o'er the young life of Isoline, strange  
Are the moods of her varying wisdom ; the light  
Of her eyes seems to hold some new bliss in its sight,  
Her step is so tranquil,  
And her smile is so quiet, so thoughtfully bright.

Bending over the roses that grow in the lane,  
O Friend ! watchful still, thou hast found her again ;  
They are lovely, but if the fresh flowers should tell •  
How they live, from the tender bud's opening swell  
To the wide, mature blossom,  
One day for the telling would answer full well.

And the blush that gives life to her smile when she  
knows  
Another is near, is not caught from the rose.  
Thy hand she will take many times in the day,  
As if your old haunts still invited ; but they  
Ere reach'd are forgotten,  
And together you go on a purposeless way.

And often at night-fall she stands all alone  
By the hill of the home-field, half sad, or is gone,  
And you know not whither. Till now, she would sing  
Some song by the fire-light, or playfully bring

A book you are reading,  
That over one thought both might happily cling.

What has charm'd that young spirit? What wild,  
trembling flame

Subdues all her life, till she shrinks as in shame?  
The sun-laden breeze on the answering lake,  
Thrills with delicate warmth all unask'd, and can take  
No sign of requital;  
So love comes unbidden, for love's only sake.

But what errant love? Have not two been enshrined  
As hersoul's best and dearest? Then how could she find  
A place so unused for a third, and how tell  
Of the unbidden guest she is serving so well,  
Who, to so sure subjection,  
So fond and rapt beauty her life can compel?

O Friend, watchful still ! all this thou hast seen ;  
In love thou art asking what lapse there has been ;  
And if in life's system this change is ordain'd,  
That the Mother's relation be only sustain'd  
Through the needs of the Child,—  
That these known no longer, her end is attain'd.

If so, it is well the fair blossoms that burst  
From her beautiful girlhood, should yield to the first  
Proffer'd hand of the stranger ; but blessed be Heaven !  
The sunlight that strength to the earth-bud has given  
Makes golden for autumn ;  
Then only by death can your compact be riven.

Yet the Mother's heart whispers, "O wherefore  
should rise  
One doubt to shade over our love's open skies ?  
Why can she not see that love's are bending over  
The life it is ready to raise up, and cover,  
And make ever its own,  
Embraces the future and past,—that the lover

Is prophetic in watchfulness ? While I was giving  
The warmth and the light and the joy of my living  
To make up the sum and the glory of thine,  
My life's only daughter, my sweet Isoline !

The future, though parted,  
For ever must bear of my blessing the sign."

Ah, Isoline ! break from the charm that has bound thee  
To this graceless silence. Whose love is around thee,  
Claiming maidenly confidence ? Who even now  
A welcome would give to the stranger, that thou

Dost own half in trembling ?

Who pace the long pathway with care-laden brow ?

Couldst thou hear their low converse, it still is of thee ;  
And couldst thou the depth of their frusting love see,  
Thou wouldst shrink from the coldness and silence  
of thine ;

Thou must tremble to know that a power so divine

Has been ever around thee,

While thou hast perceived but the peaceful home-sign.

They have turn'd to the book of their own lives, and  
there

They find, though the page of their love is most fair,  
The same mystic signs were all written before,  
The same maiden reticence love ever bore ;

With thy face before them,  
They are reading the same gentle story once more.

There's a radiant beam in the clematis-bower,  
And the wild bees in flying to each open flower  
Are stirring its heart to an answering bliss ;  
An Eden is blossoming under the kiss

Of the ripe, rosy noon,  
And Isoline's love-breathing heart cannot miss

Its soft, meaning whispers. She sits in the glow  
Of the ripening summer, the rich overflow  
Of her ripening womanhood ; fair fancies find  
Their way, opal-hued, through the light of her mind,  
And tender announcements  
Are leaving a host of warm feelings behind.

A handful of lilies is lying before her,  
Thrown down for her drawing ; and daintily o'er her  
Their delicate odour mid sunbeams is stealing ;  
And folding so pleasantly fancy with feeling,  
Rise visions of beauty,  
As the new world of love all its bliss is revealing.

But pacing the garden, half sadly, she sees  
Those so strangely forgotten : no life-bearing breeze  
Ever sprung up at eve by the cool ocean's strand,  
And temper'd the drought of the tropical land,  
More blessing and bless'd  
Than is she when she meets them with outstretching  
hand.

And the silence is broken. O true soul of love !  
O proud Mother's heart, now so ready to prove  
A new love for the loved one ! No poet of old  
Did ever so grateful heart-poem unfold,  
Or tell it so sweetly,  
As seem'd that love story by Isoline told.



THE SHADOW.



## THE SHADOW.

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In the Heaven of happy spirits,  
Where all being is so fair,  
Where the harmony of goodness  
Is like music in the air,  
Where the worship is so single,  
And the love so wide and pure,  
Where the presence of the Holy  
Is so kindred and so sure,—  
One fair spirit moved the angels,  
As her golden harp she strung ;  
All so tender was her music,  
And so sweet the praise she sung.

Walking in the holy Presence,  
And upheld on every hand,  
As a cherish'd sister tended  
By that pure and radiant band,—  
With the music of devotion  
Quivering on her harp's gold strings,  
And the smile of God's acceptance  
Glancing on her angel-wings,—  
The communion never broken,  
And more perfect day by day,  
That is silently foreshadow'd  
When earth's children love and pray,—

Wherefore fell that thoughtful shadow  
On her bliss-encircled brow,  
Like a half-remember'd sorrow,  
Bless'd and sanctified ere now ?  
Wherefore from her harp, so tuneful,  
Sometimes strains of music stole,

Almost plaintive as the breathings  
Of a calmly chasten'd soul ?  
It was not that sadness burthen'd  
Consecrated brow and tone,  
For no taint of earth could linger  
Where the Heavenly Presence shone.

The good, sympathizing angels  
Strove to lift the shadowy veil ;  
Of that unaccustom'd knowledge  
They would walk within the pale ;  
And so tenderly and truly  
Was their gentle service given,  
Soon the shadow was uplifted  
That had strangely enter'd Heaven ;  
And the one so loved said softly,  
“ O bright spirits ! bless'd above,  
Must we not sometimes remember  
Benison of earthly love ?

In your watchful ministrations  
By the green homes of the earth,  
Mark'd you one embower'd with roses  
Of a pure, perennial birth,  
Where fresh buds and fragrant blossoms  
Made a summer evermore,  
Where the grass was green and golden  
In the sun-light by the door,—  
Buds and flowers of thought and feeling  
Blooming in the light of love,  
Glowing in the living radiance  
That was beaming from above ?

One there was amongst the corn-fields  
Of a fair and pleasant land,  
Where were streams of plenty flowing  
Round a happy household band ;  
Where the sunshine was so glorious  
O'er the woodland and the lea,

Where each tuneful footstep echo'd  
Life's divinest harmony ;  
Where the myrtles and the roses  
By the open windows grew,—  
Messengers of Nature's sweetness  
To the loving and the true.

Home of earth ! remember'd ever !  
Centre of life's joys and cares,  
Radiant centre of a system  
That each faithful spirit shares !  
'Twas my home ; and morn and even,  
Like a streamlet at its birth,  
Moved the silvery, chiming footsteps  
Of the hours I pass'd on earth,—  
Silvery footsteps, chiming ever,  
While their tones did interweave  
With the rapturous praise of sunrise,  
And the grateful hymn of eve.

Life was like the ethereal vapour  
    Hanging to the garb of day ;  
Like the effulgence, all-absorbing,  
    When the vapour fades away ;  
Twofold in its power of being,  
    Morn and even blent in one,  
Meeting in the full perfection  
    Of a glowing noontide sun ;  
Like the perfect day rejoicing  
    'Mid its troops of laughing hours ;  
Like the summer day encircled  
    By its fond, dependent flowers.

Once there was a festive gathering,—  
    Buds of mine were blossoms now,  
And to grace some other homestead  
    One must leave the parent-bough.  
There were smiles and tears that morning,  
    Tears by love's own fervour dried,

And my heart was overflowing  
    With a mother's tender pride.  
You, whose chasten'd harps are sounding  
    Round about the Father's throne,  
Know that love is all-embracing,  
    That it seeketh not its own.

'Twas a lovely summer morning,  
    And that cherish'd home of ours  
Was a scene of sweet enchantment,  
    Blissful as were Eden's bowers.  
Graceful hands had twined fresh garlands  
    Round the columns of the door,  
And through broad and crystal windows  
    Shadows play'd upon the floor ;  
On the soft and leafy carpets  
    Play'd the shadows of the trees,  
And through white, transparent curtains  
    Stole the richly-scented breeze.

Many that had long been parted,  
To our festal banquet press'd ;  
And the old and faithful servant  
Mingled with the honour'd guest :  
And the open doors and windows  
Woo'd the stranger's lingering tread,  
Won the weary and the needy  
To that board so richly spread.  
Sacred trusts and fair affections  
Had so bless'd our hearts and home,  
That from earth's less favour'd children  
Never plea in vain might come.

Lily-like in modest grandeur,  
With a true and queenly air,  
Delicate and all-confiding,  
And as trusted everywhere,  
Like a queen amongst the dancers  
My own matchless Lily stood,

•

So unconseious of her graces,  
And so beautiful and good ;  
Still unmated, though so lovely ;  
For with smiles she often said,  
While we lived to bless each other,  
She should never care to wed.

I had known life's fairest pleasures  
With the chosen of my youth,  
With the loved ones blooming round us  
In their beauty and their truth ;  
And a new and thrilling gladness  
In our grateful souls was born,  
When another ask'd our blessing  
On that happy bridal morn ;  
Yet a secret grief, long hidden,  
All the mother's spirit moved,  
When I look'd upon my Lily,  
And remember'd how she loved.

For, some time before, while kneeling  
At my lonely vesper prayer,  
Breathing names of the beloved ones  
In the balmy evening air,  
Through the flower-wreaths of my window  
Came a sound like fluttering wings,  
And a voice so strange, yet clearer  
Than all earthly whisperings ;  
Scarcely seem'd that mystic murmur  
On my outer sense to weigh,  
Yet these words came floating by me,  
*Sister, thou must come away.*

Was my petted dove beside me ?  
Was my gentle Lily near ?  
Could the evening breeze be murmuring  
In a tone so strangely clear ?  
I arose ; but no wing'd creature,  
Form or semblance, met my sight,

And no zephyr broke the silence  
Of the softly coming night.  
Now I know, O tender angels !  
'Twas your voice that call'd me thence ;  
They were spirit-tones that whisper'd  
Only to my spirit-sense.

In the silent hour of midnight,  
While my happy household slept,  
And in thinking of that summons  
Sad and lonely watch I kept,  
A strange agony subdued me ;  
And in after times again,  
With heart-weariness and languor,  
Often came that mortal pain.  
Then the solemn thought was strengthen'd  
That on earth I could not stay,  
That the voice I heard at twilight  
Came to call my soul away.

Yet all tenderly my spirit  
Seem'd withdrawn from earthly things,  
And I knew the holy comfort  
That from your communion springs.  
Nearer to our God, and nearer  
Grew my being day by day ;  
And familiar was the whisper,  
'Sister, thou must come away.'  
Soon the offering was ready,  
And to Heaven the incense flow'd,  
And the consecrated altar  
With a sacred fervour glow'd.

Holy angels ! blessed ever,  
Think not that no fears or sighs  
From a human heart ascended  
With a mortal's sacrifice.  
Daily were my heart's affections  
Laid upon that glowing pyre ;

Nightly did my weeping fancies  
Damp the sacrificial fire :  
Now my youth's familiar faces  
Cheer'd my upward way,—and then  
Later ties, not less alluring,  
Drew me back to earth again.

On the fresh wings of the morning  
Sometimes would my spirit soar,  
Higher, higher, till it rested  
Close by Heaven's open door :  
On the soft couch of the noontide,  
'Mid its fervour or its calm,  
Sometimes I could lie, while solaced  
By some rare, immortal balm ;  
But, alas ! the cloud of even,  
And the night-sky's earnest eyes,  
Came to tell of strange misgivings,  
And of unknown destinies.

Often, too, I mourn'd and languish'd  
For the treasures left behind,—  
O'er the parting of the spring-tide,  
O'er the beautiful and kind.  
And when he, so dearly cherish'd,  
By my yearning bosom slept,  
In his love, so strong and trusting,  
Sadly, consciously I wept ;  
Till the Watchers' downy pinions  
Soothed my faint and languid head,  
And their hope-inspiring whispers  
Chased the anguish from my bed.

So upon that bridal morning  
Oft my Lily's eyes I met,  
Looking like sweet April violets  
That the dews of earth had wet ;  
And their soft and sad expression  
Her new-waken'd fear reveal'd :

Ah ! my faded form was telling  
    What a mother's love conceal'd ;  
For the beautiful and blooming  
    Greeted Lily everywhere,  
And my worn and wasted presence  
    Was too sure a contrast there.

As still nearer drew the season  
    Ere the final summons came,  
Oftener fell the benediction,  
    *Rest thou, in thy Father's name.*  
And the troubles of existence  
    Met my failing feet no more,  
For a never-fading Presence  
    Hope and comfort did outpour.  
Now the silver chord, though breaking,  
    With sweet harmony was rife,  
For the tender angels only  
    Play'd upon the strings of life.

And thenceforth life's plaintive music  
    Scarcely trembled at my will ;  
Closer grew the heavenly converse,  
    And my soul seem'd stronger still.  
'Mid its new and vast perceptions,  
    Beautiful, yet still and strange,  
Could I heed the gentle tremor  
    That earth mingled with each change ?  
Faithful arms were ever ready  
    To support my weary head,  
Tender forms and true were gather'd  
    As good angels round my bed.

Could I fear ? Long years had told me  
    That for one I need not fear ;  
Though awhile on earth he tarried,  
    His loved name was written here.  
One in heart, in mind, in spirit,  
    One in every thought of Heaven,—

Though alone I cross'd its threshold,

Death has not our spirits riven.

Could I fear for those whose being

Had so hopefully begun ?

Those young lips had said so often,

' Father ! still Thy will be done.'

Angel-voices in the distance,

Prayers of lov'd ones whisper'd by

And the One who never fail'd me

Looking towards me tenderly,—

Mine of earth and mine of Heaven

Interchanging by my side,

And a Form before the darkness

Waiting to be Guard and Guide,

All so radiant that the darkness

Parted as we went our way,—

And the Earthly and the Heavenly

In one glorious being lay.

Of the chasten'd, grateful rapture  
That the new-born spirit meets ;  
Of the full, the rich completion  
That its perfect vision greets ;  
Of the bliss, the love, the beauty,  
Of the mysteries all unseal'd,  
Of the spirit's sacred treasures  
To the longing sight reveal'd,  
Need I tell ? O happy angels !  
All the joys of Heaven you know ;  
But, alas ! through this fair glory  
I behold one face of woe.

Walking still amongst the shadows,  
One pale, drooping form I see,  
And above the seraphs' music  
Comes a mournful cry to me."  
Stay that sigh, sweet Spirit Mother !  
Trembling on your harp's gold strings ;

Dry that tear, and let the angels  
Fold thee with their tender wings.  
That loved voice thy Heaven must enter ;  
Know you not its soft earth-tone ?  
Lily's chasten'd heart is saying,  
" Father ! may Thy will be done !"



POEMS OF LIFE.



## POEMS OF LIFE.

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### I.

THE poet lives all being, though alone,  
All thought and feeling, and all influence ;  
He is the ever-quick and truthful one,  
The type of life, though gladly gathering thence  
Whate'er may minister to soul or sense ;  
His nature ever deepens as he goes,  
And calmly blends with all that to its fulness flows.

Strange power of vision,—wisdom yet more strange  
However brief his life, a perfect whole,  
Making so rapid and entire exchange,

Yet keeping fresh and separate his soul !  
The life of each to him is like a scroll,  
He has himself in still communion penn'd,  
As legend it might be of his own aim and end.

It is mysterious barter, some will say ;  
Such gain is inexpedient, some declare ;  
They have made like exchange, and cite the day  
They found some counterpart ; and in despair  
At meeting only a false image there,  
Strove to forget what seem'd a threaten'd madness,  
To limit the moved soul to its own bliss or sadness.

The poet knows the range of joy and hope,  
Searches the mysteries of despair and woe ;  
And set within his mind's extended scope,  
Are all the loves that change so oft below,  
And all the passions that make man the foe  
Of wisdom. But for these, it might be said,  
We scarcely need to pass the ordeal of the dead.

From some he bears their hour of perfectness,—  
That hour that is so transient and so sole,  
The one that artists borrow to express  
Their glowing type of nature's measured dole ;  
And the still life from which he thus has stole  
Its fair meridian, is not more unreal,  
Powerless to grasp the true, faithless to its ideal.

The young and beautiful who hasten on,  
With love and hope unsullied yet for dower,  
Like morning clouds rejoicing in the sun,  
Unconscious that, ere evening, a shower  
Their fair and happy being may deflower,  
He meets, and thinks of one whom Spartan feet  
Trampled to death, while meaning him to greet,

Because fame had declared him beautiful.

And thus these ardent ones will crush the good  
That has been placed before them. They will pull  
From the fair tree of life, though it be crude,  
The fruit that should become a long life's food.

Those too are here whom earth cannot allure,  
The true light-bearers they, the luminous and pure.

And over these there is a glorious sway,  
Crowning with grace and dignity each brow ;  
Yet to each other mournfully they say,  
“ Child of mortality ! whence comest thou ?  
And whither are thy footsteps tending now ? ”  
O poet ! make the burden of their cry,  
To Heaven, whence we came, heirs of eternity !

And the night-watchers come, the hollow-eyed,  
Pale students of some other one as lorn,—  
Fame for their goal, but weariness their guide,—  
Who, holding thought's swift wing, think they  
may scorn  
The midnight rest and the sweet breath of morn.  
The glowing hope that each full breast is lading,  
Lifts not the languor that each heavy brow is  
shading.

“Ah ! show us what is life ; for we are faint,  
And knowledge but recedes howe’er we fly.  
Pursuit is vain ; and to our anxious plaint  
There is no answer ; and we long to try  
The wondrous power of wisdom ere we die.”  
Say, poet, they shall have all truth and light,  
If they have only learn’d to keep their hearts  
aright.

The aged ones whom God still lends to earth,  
He reverently greets. With ready hand  
The angel of immortal life comes forth  
To welcome to his side the veteran band,  
With consummation happy ; for the land  
Of promise is before them ; and the mind  
Of the home-seeking wanderer lingers not behind.

Like autumn trees, so rich in their decay,  
They wait to lay their mortal glories down ;  
A golden haze is round this latter day,

The sign of Life's completion and renown,  
And the foreshadow of the heavenly crown ;  
And all seem conscious that for them erewhile  
Another youth will glow, another spring will smile.

The wind makes ripples on the fretting river ;  
Each will the next absorb ; the little waves,  
Though seeming so unchanged, are changing ever,  
And the sun gilds them all. And thus time paves  
Life's peopled pathway with half-open'd graves ;  
And into these glide the pale, weary hours,  
Each crown'd for sacrifice with sad, funereal flowers.

O poet, living all things ! how appears  
To thee this immolation ? All too salt  
The sacrifice must be with human tears ;  
Or thou, with mind prophetic, may'st exalt  
Life's furrow'd path to Heaven's serener vault ;  
And the sad, dying hours that shock some eyes,  
May be as signs that mark our passage to the skies.

II.

Love is life's congenial spirit. Each to meet its  
destined end,

Nature's forces ever mingle, and to higher being  
tend.

As the whirlpool spreads and lapses in the ocean of  
its change,

Love will interweave the present, and eternal futures  
range.

We have watch'd the wind's fair wooing, how to  
win the sweet embrace

Every flower lays bare its bosom, and the green  
boughs interlace ;

We have seen the happy sunbeam, how it hastes to  
fold the plain,

And how plain and wood and mountain seem to fold  
the beam again.

And we know how every earth-bud swells beneath  
the air's warm kiss,  
Till the rose unfolds its treasures, giving, taking,  
life and bliss ;  
How light quickens from its monad to the full and  
perfect day ;  
And how nature's myriad pulses throb beneath the  
genial ray.

There are powers whose might supernal is the order  
of the spheres ;  
There are laws whose subtle working from eternity  
appears :  
Prompting the almighty fiat, ruling the almighty  
plan,  
Love is life and power and order, Heaven's will made  
known to man.

When God sought a soul to fashion that might live  
    beyond the spheres,  
That might ever anchor safely, though amid its earthly  
    fears,  
Always veering towards His being, as the poles the  
    magnet move,  
One ray from His life He granted, and the kindling  
    ray was Love.

Therefore Love is all-enduring, and in patience still  
    must rest,  
Like a rock amongst the billows the eternities to  
    breast.  
Therefore are its wings immortal, earth and heaven  
    to outlast,—  
A bright phoenix ever rising from the ashes of the  
    Past.

Let us watch the child's fresh life-stream, of such  
    crystal pureness seeming ;

Every drop that swells the current with Love's radiant  
    hues is beaming ;  
But the mighty master speaks not in the thoughtless,  
    gay caress ;  
There he is, but does not answer in that captious  
    tenderness.

Now the elfin gambol ceases and the tiny hands are  
    clasp'd,  
And some new and stranger feeling over the young  
    breast has pass'd ;  
Kindred spirits are about him, smiling where his feet  
    may tread ;  
And the little one is fearful lest he crush some  
    floweret's head.

With the rush of mighty waters, with the grandeur  
    of the earth,  
With the flower-wreath hanging o'er us, with the  
    rose-bud's tender birth,

We would mingle our own being,—we would raise  
the misty screen  
Of the future and the distant, though some tears may  
intervene.

As a river proudly meeting all its tributary streams,  
Beauty meets our willing tribute, and we mingle with  
its beams ;  
Far the aspiring soul is soaring ; but the star-crown'd  
head must stoop,  
And these disappointed pinions o'er the panting  
bosom droop.

Music, high and holy music, does it win to honied rest?  
Thoughts of greatness and of goodness, do they tran-  
quillize the breast ?  
All the excellence we honour, all the great and good  
we seek,  
To the powers that are within us, of some higher  
glory speak.

As with light and silvery footsteps sleep upon the  
poet steals,  
And in numbers soft and tuneful secrets of his lore  
reveals,—  
Rhythm flowing far more sweetly than his waking  
hours invite,  
Bearing fancies richer, higher than all other hours  
indite ;

So ethereal and so tuneful shall the sweet conviction  
rest,  
That desire has satisfaction, that to love is to be blest :  
Earth has yielded up its secrets, life its mysteries has  
unfur'd,  
And our own epithalamium has its echo in a world.

Love ! for highest earnest have we that design to  
this is tending ;  
To the eternal we are seeking, Love its fairest life is  
lending.

Drink ! the genial waters mingle, and their power is  
all divine ;

Plunge ! Bethesda's pool is mantling, and its healing  
shall be mine.

Though a Proteus in its guises, as a meteor strangely  
bright,

Revelling sometimes in changes and in phosphores-  
cent light,—

Let Love be our inspiration, and though seventy  
years may fall

In a whitening shower around us, it shall bear the  
test through all.

And that gentle superstition, lovely dream of classic  
shore,

One of the fair memories left us of the darkening  
days of yore,—

With its touching, solemn beauty, a similitude does  
bear

To that deeper invocation Love is uttering every-  
where,—

That the voice of the best loved one, whispering by  
the bed of death,

Can arrest the wandering spirit, and call back the  
passing breath.

Love with sweet, alluring accents woos the glory and  
the worth,

From the highest and the holiest, for the blessing of  
the earth.

III.

There is a fair, creative power, pervading human  
things,

Mingling with scenes of weal and woe some veins of  
purer ray ;

One gleam of its essential fire upon life's secret  
springs,

And all its strangeness and its gloom dissolve in  
floods of day.

Now, like the calm of the blue heavens it tells of  
happy rest ;

Now, hints of mighty meaning pours into the listen-  
ing mind ;

Now, as the storm's wild utterance, it works a high  
    behest  
For Him who is abroad upon the white wings of the  
    wind.

A hymn of sweet harmonious tone swells upward to  
    the skies ;  
Earth's voices tender, wild or low, all gracefully are  
    blending ;  
And to the spirit's life it speaks, though desert still-  
    ness lies,—  
Type of another covenant, o'er all its arch suspending.

As morning 'mid the dew-drops stands, so tearful  
    yet so bright,  
Ere the sun's burning glance has chased such loveli-  
    ness from earth,  
So life by Poetry is blessed with wealth of orient  
    light,  
From childhood's gentle purity to age's holier worth.

'Tis this that prompts the winning tones that greet  
the child's young years,  
The unsought loves and joys that fall as blessings on  
its head,  
The pleasures all so rainbow-like, the faith that has  
no fears,  
The fair, fresh gifts of life's bright morn this spirit-  
power has shed.

And Poetry has wrought a crown with costly gems  
bedight,  
Hope vital ever, though obscured, love, honour, faith  
and truth ;  
And it will bear the circlet high in heaven's serener  
light,  
Though disappointments come to cloud the prophecy  
of youth.

'Tis in the hidden excellence of every untaught mind,  
An inspiration that seems fraught with all that marks  
the sage ;

It is life's glory, and the grace its deepest truths to  
find ;

It is a load-star set on high to bless the steps of  
age.

And where humanity is bow'd by labour's iron hand,  
Where upward-looking eyes are dimm'd by needs too  
hard to bear,

Its light-wing'd feet have minister'd unto the toil-  
worn band ;

We trace it by the living flowers that blossom even  
there.

And to our very griefs it is a promise-bow of Heaven,  
Whose source is in the tears that fall from sorrow-  
laden eyes ;

And as the lightning rends the cloud that bends the  
brow of even,

It is a message through the gloom illuming all our  
skies.

Around that altar too it plays, whose horns reach to  
the skies,  
As hidden thoughts of trustfulness and deeds of perfect love,—  
The incense of a worthy life, the flame of sacrifice,  
Wreathing the offerings of earth, then bearing them  
above.

Its votaries have made on earth an everlasting name ;  
Their noble works still witness bear to ever-present  
good.

The meeting-point of two fair worlds, so diverse, yet  
the same,—  
If it be our interpreter, all may be understood.

And many that the world has own'd with reverent  
feet have trod  
The shrine its priests have sanctified with their all-  
hallow'd clay ;  
There, so unquestion'd in its might, eternal as a god,

The wildest heart, the noblest head, yield to its welcome sway.

'Tis said, amid the ancient reeds, whose dark, crown'd  
heads are hung  
Over the everlasting Nile, the wind with skilful hand,  
Waking the world-old harmonies, sweet rhythmic  
changes rung,  
Until the pulse of sound became a voice for every  
land ;—

Key to the spirit's lore ! of thee 'tis even thus we  
deem ;  
Thus, dost thou wed each life-throb to some purpose  
more sublime ;  
Blending in rich, responsive chords all that we do or  
dream,  
Thou art making perfect music for the listening ears  
of time.

IV.

Immortal ones have set above my brow  
The white rose-wreath I wear, and even now  
The pale Death-angel has immortal wings.  
This torch was kindled by Heaven's living fire ;  
And ere things worn and weary can expire,  
It will renew life's springs.

It was with eager pleasure that I still'd  
The crude, insentient throb of life that fill'd  
Creation's earliest births ; for well I knew  
The dull and inert masses would condense  
About earth's ardent bosom, until thence  
Things far more noble grew,

And flowers, whose beauty and perfume should crown  
My triumphs, so that angels looking down  
Might love this paradise ; and still my hands  
Spared not the young creation's hour of pride ;  
But, in their pristine glory, scatter'd wide  
The mighty forest-bands.

Gently I placed the canker-worm of death  
Within the rose's bosom, and my breath  
Was laden with the fragrant life of flowers ;  
For by their heavenward perfume I had learn'd  
How, weary of their fleeting loves, they burn'd  
For bliss without their bowers.

I strike the key-note, and a passing dirge  
Floats o'er creation ; and to being's verge  
I bear the worn and faded forms of things.  
Lethæan slumbers from my locks I shake,  
To ages in their lapse soft music make,  
Till a new birth-song rings.

I beckon onward the sweet autumn days  
With silent finger ; and the sigh that strays  
    'Mid falling leaves in the still woods, is mine.  
The haze so sweetly mournful, that must seem  
To blend all life with nature, in a dream  
    Half earthly, half divine,

Is the hush'd expectation, calm and lowly,  
Of the tired earth, that waits with temper holy,  
    While I shall mark the dial-plate of Time.  
A consecrating prayer from all things stealing,  
Holds every passion, every thought and feeling,  
    In consonance sublime.

But as the elements of mortal mould  
With finer issues mingle, to enfold  
    The spirit-life for Heaven, 'tis mine to wrest  
Affections from their living roots, and move  
Like subtle poison through the breast of love,  
    And break the spirit's rest.

Yet Heaven my mission tempers ; for hope moors  
In goodly anchorage ; and Nature pours

Her kindly influence, and wins her own.  
And if by slow degrees man's earthly frame  
Must meet its destiny, the thrice-wrought flame  
Quivering to round the Throne,

My tender, winning music is a charm  
To lull the throbbing sense, to soothe and calm,  
And with sweet lassitude to bear away ;  
Or, must I conquer by some sudden stroke,  
The thread was slender, and at once it broke,  
Bearing no slow decay.

A little child with opening buds was playing,  
A very sunbeam amid flowers straying,  
Precious as thought of good in dying hours ;  
I press'd my lips upon its dimpling cheek,  
And angels flew the fluttering soul to seek,  
To bloom with fadeless flowers.

I was a wedding-guest beside the altar ;  
And when warm lips over the vow did falter,  
    Mine, secrets of another bond reveal'd ;  
And the bride, trembling in her hour of bliss  
Beneath the life-like fervour of my kiss,  
    But thought love's contract seal'd.

My hand upon the fever'd brow is press'd,  
And it is cool, and hope of speedy rest  
    Is all the weary one of life can bear.  
The feathery snow-flake on my breast might lie,  
It seems so still and cold ; yet misery  
    Slumbers serenely there.

Unto the aged I have ever been  
A gentle messenger ; starr'd is my sheen  
    With blessed memories, my brow hope-crown'd ;  
And to the good I am a herald-dove,  
My green branch earnest of renewing love,  
    And of celestial ground.

. . .

In that rich clime where beauty's hand had given  
Her worshipers their all of earth and heaven,—

There, fairest form of being deified,  
In still life wrought, I was a thing adored ;  
And fed my lamp beside the festal board,  
The godlike by my side.

I had a covenant with the beautiful,  
And fair ones sought my wooing ; they would cull  
My favours as sweet incense ; for I bore  
The longing spirit to its rest above,  
The lover to his lost and heavenly love,  
The wanderer home once more.

Men yoked me with a rosy, gold-hair'd boy,  
And called me *sleep's twin brother*. To destroy,  
My kiss was gracious as expiring day :  
But soon my throne was outraged ; then I hurl'd  
My broken sceptre o'er a traitorous world ;  
And sterner was my sway.

My temples throbb'd beneath the brazen ring  
That crown'd me as avenger, or as king

Where passion only raged ; my hands were scarr'd ;  
This form was rudely changed ; my once fair face,  
So gentle in its soft and pitying grace,  
By a strange frenzy marr'd.

And the loud wail that o'er my head arose  
From the distracted earth, was 'mid my woes

A never-ceasing trouble ; 'neath my feet  
The plague-spot spread, and wild, discordant cries  
Went up from battle-fields, and scorching sighs  
Follow'd my wings' dull beat.

Then to the earth came One whose life combined  
All that had ever been by God design'd,

In perfect grace. Again I wing'd the skies ;  
I seal'd the covenant ; and in triumph bore  
The holy One the eternal throne before ;  
And crown'd the sacrifice.

No longer is my realm the weeping night ;  
And for my mourning vesture, robes of light,  
    As herald of eternity, I wear.  
And I am station'd at the golden gate  
Whose inner court is Life ; and, hopeful, wait  
    Till I may enter there.

THE  
BIRTHDAY ON PIERUS.



THE  
BIRTHDAY ON PIERUS.

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I.

MNEMOSYNE.

THE music that upon the spirit falls,  
Is sign and earnest of its truer heaven ;  
Secrets of bliss and power it breathes to those  
Who listen while its gentle law is given.  
The music that in perfect measure flows  
Upon the spirit, is its voice of fate.  
The conscious dignity of crowned state,  
The graces that are yet unknown and wait  
With lowly ones, shelter'd by cottage walls,  
Fair silken pleasures and soul-filling peace,

The promise the bless'd present shall not cease  
Till all things are subdued, and life may be  
King of its hour, are of this harmony.

But if the spirit lose its silver key,  
Soon it must lose its rare supremacy ;  
And partial natures catch some parting strain  
As it comes floating by, and interweave  
Their finite thought with its infinity.  
So, for the artist, music lives again ;  
And so the busy world can but perceive  
A picture or a poem or a song,  
And not the perfect life, the liberty,  
That to the elder sons of God belong.  
But did the elder keep their high estate ?  
Did the mild, vernal airs of each free spirit  
Subdue the elements that we inherit,  
As diverse interests of love and hate ?  
As vernal airs of earth blend hue and tone  
In a soft, mystic oneness all their own,  
And yet all others, did those sons of light,  
Those we have raised to empyrean height,

Temper the glorious elements that lie  
About all life, to so pure harmony ?

Mnemosyne fled from the scornful eyes  
Of those proud ladies, who made close their ranks  
When she approach'd, and moved her from her place,  
And scorn'd her with their looks of mock surprise ;  
Until her happy love flush'd all her face,  
As if a shame stole o'er her from the past ;  
Because their king had won her for his bride,  
To one's despite, and stay'd not by her side.  
She wandered long by fair Peneus' banks ;  
But Tempe's vale too often saw their forms,  
And so she fled affrighted towards the west,  
And by a fountain lay awhile to rest.  
The proud and angry queen beheld her there,  
And drove her forth. Upon the Mount of Storms  
Some time she braved the vivid lightning's glare ;  
But fearful for her life, she turn'd again,  
And found in Pierus a shelter'd glen.

It was a lonely spot and very still,  
Within the bosom of the watching hill ;  
And in her weariness and sorer strait  
It offer'd peace. " Now, if he love me still,"  
She said, " here he can find me if he will.  
But if thou come, my husband and my king !  
No regal splendours bring.  
Come as I saw thee when beneath the plane  
I shelter'd from the fervid noontide beam,  
Beside our favourite stream ;  
And, listless in my youthful ignorance  
Of what life has of bliss or of mischance,  
I lay, and counted on my amaranth chain  
The birthdays of my royal sisterhood.

Once all was fair around and bright above,  
Because thou wast my good,  
So great in wisdom and so strong in love.

Now I am weary of the star-bright hall,  
And of the grand imperial ones who wait  
Their turn to supersede or fall.

And I am passing weary of the state,  
The cold, unfeeling dignity of queens ;  
Of the train'd garden bowers,  
Of the unfading flowers  
That always keep their purple stiff and straight ;  
Of heaven's crystal airs ;  
And of the symbols given  
Of a still higher and a fairer heaven,  
And which are silent as our great ones' prayers."

Mnemosyne had gladly found a nook  
In Pierus ; but when she lean'd to look  
Over the plain below, much marvelling  
The expected sunrise was so lingering,  
She saw but weird-like forms of trailing mists,  
And little floating clouds of feathery lightness,  
Caught here and there upon the mountain lists,  
And there suspended in fantastic aims  
To rise to regions owning not their claims.  
Awhile she stood so still in her surprise,

And eastward look'd with home-desiring eyes,  
But o'er Olympus hung a pale gray haze ;  
And then a shower with a fine gauzy maze  
Enveloped her, until a noontide beam  
Flush'd the pale mists, and moved a little stream  
Of the dull vapours ; when she look'd again,  
They parted slowly, and she saw a plain  
Of waters that seem'd sleeping heavily.  
Pelion and Ossa and Olympus stood  
Like dim gray watchers by the misty flood.  
Dreary they look'd, and all that she had loved  
Seem'd far away ; and as the vapours moved  
So slowly, o'er her life they seem'd to spread,  
And close her from the living. Then the day,  
Long drowsy, woke at last, and brightly shed  
Beam after beam and chased the gloom away,  
And rested where the sleeping waters lay.

A beautiful blue bird, with rapid flight,  
Struck from the cliff below ; its glancing wings,

Rising and falling in the sunny light,  
Reflected rich green rays. She marvell'd why  
Its flight was so impatient, and the rings  
Of its quick flight were narrow'd, till it lay  
Hush'd on the waters in the sunniest ray,—  
An emerald glowing on a golden bed.  
Then she remember'd 'twas Alcyone,  
She who had wander'd on the wild sea-shore,  
While tempests made a chaos of the sea,  
Praying for him she had so lately wed,—  
Praying the storm might spare the bark that bore  
All of her love and hope,—she who had pray'd  
The winds and waves, till a repentant wave  
Brought her drown'd husband to the shore, and laid  
All of her love and hope before her there,—  
She who had met this answer to her prayer,  
And who had waited till a pitying wave  
Took up the dead again to its sea-grave,—  
Alcyone, who follow'd faithfully  
Her husband to his burial in the sea,

And slept by him in the funereal sea,  
Until a change renew'd them, and once more  
They saw each other through the form each bore,  
By their deep love, that could not change or die.  
And she remember'd that the waves must lie  
In reverent calm about them, and must bear  
The cradle of their love right carefully,  
And break no more their sweet life-harmony.  
And as she watch'd the happy, brooding bird,  
A voice that echo'd all her life she heard.

## II.

## OLYMPUS.

Our gardens wait for thee, Mnemosyne !  
 Their bowers are all entangled, and their scents  
 Are faint, as if they sigh'd and pined for thee.  
 The flowers hang listlessly upon their stems ;  
 Those pale blue blossoms,—I have seen you wear  
 Flowers like them twined with grasses gem-bestrown,—  
 Droop heavily around the slumbering lake,  
 And only meet the heavens' reflected light.  
 Thy golden chair in our Olympian courts,  
 Highest except thy queen's, is empty still ;  
 And those I meet have a distracted air,  
 As if some precious thing, long known, was lost.  
 And noble ones pace up and down our courts  
 With fingers press'd upon their bending brows,

So striving to concentrate vagrant thoughts,  
Or join the floating semblances of thought.  
The nymphs that made thy train so bright and fair,  
As up and down the mountain-paths you went,  
Peopling the sunbeams with a living grace,  
Wander alone with eyes cast to the ground,  
Or sit beside the fountains looking in,  
As if their shadows only lived for them.  
She, whom I knew as always nearest thee,  
Met me one morning on the mountain's verge,  
A pale star beaming o'er her pallid brow,  
With eyes from which no spirit seem'd to look,  
With clinging robe and hair quite damp with dew ;  
She pass'd me quickly as she knew me not,  
And spread her hands out towards the folding mist,  
Saying, " Alas ! for me the end is come !"  
And disappear'd in the bewildering mist.

The couch beneath the plane-tree's shadowy boughs  
Beside the softly-flowing stream that cools  
The valley of our love, is vacant too.

I have not heard thy clear and joyous tones,—  
The music of the happy Past that plays  
Upon the senses of immortal ones,—  
Since last I left thee laughing on that couch,  
Under the waving tree, thy white foot dipp'd  
In cool Peneus, thy white arms upraised  
To pull the trembling, leafy branches down,  
In sportive bashfulness, that they might veil,—  
Ah ! ready leaves,—thy loveliness from me ;  
Because I turn'd again and yet again  
To look upon thy beauty resting there,  
In all the glory of new wedded love.

I left thee laughing at the great queen's ire,  
Should she, returning from her morning bath  
In dignified composure, meet for morn,  
Encounter a young shepherd in his plaid,  
His eyes love-lighted by victorious love,  
His hair in clustering curls about his brow,  
His hair and brow so wondrously like mine,  
Not hidden by the shepherd's cap he wore,  
But bearing sign and meaning of a crown.

Ay, thou rememberest, where'er thou art,  
Fair truant lady of my heart and me !

Remembering, thy memory is sweet  
Of that bright noon when I, in seeking thee,  
Drove forth the flocks along the river's bank,  
Their white backs showing 'mid the flowery grass,  
When their small, eager faces suddenly  
Were turn'd in startled wonder towards a maid  
Who lay upon the green and springing turf,  
Under a leafy tree, watching the stream,  
In the luxuriant indolence of youth.

Thou hast not wander'd far, my love, I know ;  
For though I see thee not and hear thee not,  
Love has a sign and prescience of its own,  
And antecedes the presence it desires.  
It holds the lover's soul, and with soft arms  
Embraces all his life, and prophesies,—  
“ This trembling joy, this sweet and glowing joy,  
Is the warm, rosy shadow of my love,  
Her spirit bending towards me from her bower.”

III.

MOUNT PIERUS.

The little glen of Pierus was bright  
With permeant rays of warmly-glowing light ;  
Mnemosyne was resting 'mid the flowers  
That laid their blossoms, fragrant with dew-showers,  
Upon her blooming cheek ; and bending o'er her  
Was her loved shepherd-lover, and before her  
Were nine bright maidens, learning reverently  
How best to aid a tried humanity  
To meet the rare accords of life's full harmony.

Mnemosyne, taught by the shepherd-king,  
Took laurel and fresh flowers and glittering gems,  
And made them into wreaths and diadems,  
And crown'd the maidens ; and some wondrous thing  
Of meaning and of beauty she inwove

With their rich dresses ; and in weaving strove  
To typify how regal robe and crown  
Imply the investment of a conscious right  
And power to rule for virtue and renown,—  
Imply a kingdom govern'd to fair height.  
And with each robe and wreath a charge was given,—  
“ Meet helpfully the look earth turns to heaven.”

---

From the shelter of the glen,  
From the rose-light of its bowers,  
From its lovely, fond home-flowers,  
Forth among the strifes of men,  
Went the consecrated Nine,—  
One by one, each with a mission  
Bless'd for fair and sure fruition,—  
Leaders on a way divine,  
Flower-like in soft May-meetness,  
Woman-like in tender sweetness,  
Queenly, with a rare completeness,  
By their sweet and pitying eyes,

By their will and by their power, and their grand,  
imperial guise.

For the lords of deeds sublime,  
Who keep restless watch for fame,  
And with longing for a name  
Make a covenant with time,—  
Letting use and purpose go  
Of their doing and their daring,—  
Noble, but ignobly sharing  
One strong passion with the low,—  
Lest they fail before their mood,  
Lest the noble and the good  
Be less fairly understood,—

Fame shall weave a laurel crown,  
Faithful ministers shall write the fair page of their  
renown.

Spirits of some finer sphere,  
Now of its according grace  
Bearing little power or trace,

Though to earth-accustom'd ear  
    Soon celestial music dies,  
And the inspiring tones of heaven  
Having much of earthly leaven,  
    Sink in parted harmonies,—  
Whispers from a world above  
To its purer life shall move,  
Of its truer life shall prove ;  
    Music threads with silver strings,  
Thrilling to the lightest touch all the life of earthly  
    things.

For those stretching longing hands  
    Towards the waving rosy wreath,  
    Heeding not what lies beneath,  
Or how soon the fair rose-bands  
    Break and lie about their feet,—  
For those listening 'neath the moon  
To the echo, fading soon,  
    Of the thought that seem'd so sweet,—

Lovely forms on festive wing  
New delights for ever bring,  
And diviner voices sing

    All their best imaginings,  
Powers of rarest grace known only by the healing  
    from their wings.

For those hastening from the dark,  
    Meeting twilight of the skies  
    With impatient night-veil'd eyes,  
Searching nature deep for mark  
    Of their own infinity,—

Little parted truths discerning,  
Inefficient lessons learning

    Of the great life-harmony,—  
Lest the grander meaning fade,  
Wisdom's visions fall in shade,  
Knowledge, weariness be made,—

    Smiling all the darkness through,  
Life has gracious witnesses to the beautiful and true.



POEMS.



## THE TWO MORNINGS.

---

THE delicate fingers of the morning traced,  
In frosted silver on the window-panes,  
A landscape of the Scandinavian woods,  
And here and there the jungles and fair trees  
Of the rich southern islands. The red sun  
Threw over them a bright and transient glow,  
And then effaced them. Margaret's forehead press'd  
The cold, damp ruin, and her soul went out  
From its late beauty, its so chaste design  
Of northern strength and tropic loveliness,  
Into the drear oblivion of grief.

And in her weeping, blind to all but grief  
And its sad thoughts, she wonder'd that the sun  
Could come that way with front so broad and bold,—  
Could stand and gaze into that desolate room  
With smile so imperturbable, when Death  
Was lifting up his hand in that still room,—  
When Death was waiting by that trembling couch,  
And whispering with his pale, relentless lips  
The summons the awed spirit must obey.

Sudden and joyous as the cry that hail'd  
The wells, green bosom'd, amid Elim's palms,  
And falling on the heart with so sweet sense,  
So startling and clear cadence on the ear,  
Came from the couch a quick and rapturous cry :  
“O, this is Paradise ! That is my soul,—  
That fair young creature, with the radiant look  
Of instant blessedness and greetings new.  
And now my mother meets me ; and she bears  
The sweet, lost child, so lovely and so mourn'd.

Yes, this is Paradise ! and we are here :  
Blessed be God !”

As Margaret caught the hand,  
She knew that she was on the earth alone.  
There was no wake of spirits in the room,  
No opening in the tranquil arch of heaven,  
No voice of whisper'd greetings or farewells.  
But in that last, first look of life, she read  
Celestial lineaments, and was assured  
That, though transfigured for so little time,  
Her mother had interpreted for God ;  
And to the sad, sure prophecy of love,  
So mournful now, the intercepted life  
Would be an angel's of good ministry.

IF LOVED, NOT LOST.

---

LOVED and lost one ! I am weary  
    With this longing pain :  
Heaven is dark and earth is dreary,  
    And tears fall like rain.  
O, the night that could not borrow  
Night's own solace for the morrow !  
O, the bitter, bitter sorrow,—  
    Sorrow all in vain !

Silence, silence, pining spirit !  
    Blinding tears, be dry !  
Does the grief we must inherit  
    Darken all the sky ?  
Look up to the blue above thee ;  
Angel-faces smile, " We love thee ;"

Angels sing, "Tis but to prove thee :"

Look, O look on high !

What is this that I am singing ?

Loved, is lost no more :

What sweet notes from Heaven are ringing ?

*"She is gone before."*

Wondrous wisdom ! failing never,

Loved but once, is loved for ever ;

Death no spirit-bond can sever,

Life no love *restore*.

We were one ; O still enfold me !

One we yet may be :

Let thy pure eyes oft behold me,

Lest I fall from thee.

Saint on earth, my poor life heeding,

Friend in heaven, still interceding,

Ah ! I see thee, feel thee, leading

And sustaining me !

DE PROFUNDIS.

---

WHERE the peace that passeth knowledge  
Is pervading and eternal ;  
Where the life is all-sufficing,  
Bliss and harmony supernal,—  
God of Heaven, O hear my cry !  
From the discords that surround me,  
From the evils that have bound me,  
From these grievous ills within,  
Thoughts and impulses of sin,  
Lift me to the peace on high !

Lord of Heaven, and earth's Redeemer !

Bear me upward—nearer, nearer ;

Draw me from the whelming evil ;

Can its taint make pureness dearer ?

Ah ! I feel its purple shade

Heaven's white glories closing over ;

Christ's own face it seems to cover,—

Not the shadow of the grave !

Save me, O Redeemer ! save ;

Grant me everlasting aid !

OUR SPIRIT-FRIEND.

---

WILT thou leave awhile thy place in heaven,  
Its fair converse and its choral strain,  
And with me amongst the sweet wild roses  
Pace the once familiar path again ?

Bless'd Immortal,—and yet mine for ever !  
Now the form so long beloved I see ;  
Come yet nearer, as of old thou camest ;  
Smile as thou wast wont to smile on me !

Since we two upon this bank were sitting,  
Many changes has the homestead seen ;  
Some are strangers to the sacred threshold,  
Who so long thy tender care had been.

One, whose eyes thy own had met so fondly,  
Their benign expression rested there,  
Rules another home ; and thine is fairer  
As thou seest all his life so fair.

One, so ardent in his early manhood,  
Who so proudly own'd thy love divine,  
Safe beneath thy hallowing affection,  
Scarcely falls from any hope of thine.

Two there are who in their tender girlhood  
Were thy pride and ever-watchful care ;  
Ah ! their sweetest satisfactions whisper,  
“ Hadst thou lived to see how bless'd they are !”

That most gentle one, our sweet, young sister,  
Who without thee could not gladly stay,  
In her love and meekness was remember'd,  
And God sent to bear His child away.

Yet thy own beneath the roof-tree lingers,  
Till thou come to take him by the hand,  
Till thou lead him by the silent yew-trees,  
And, for ever one, in Heaven you stand.

Speak as thou wast wont to speak ; thy accents  
Linger still with me where'er I go ;  
Wordless songs they seem, whose pitying meaning  
My sad, longing heart can best bestow.

We have known no parting since that morning  
When the solemn earth closed over thee ;  
For a truer love, a finer vision,  
A diviner help, thou art to me.

We shall know no parting, now or ever,  
If I follow that white angel-hand  
That I see in sunshine or in shadow,  
Pointing forward to the Holy Land.

ELLEN.

---

In the beautiful spring-time  
    She went to her rest ;  
In the spring of her life-time,  
    As fittest and best ;  
    A delicate veil  
    Of the flower-scented gale,  
And a life-time of sweetness  
    Drawn over her breast.

She had said that the garden  
    Nursed newly-born flowers,  
They would bloom in her summer  
    As fairly as ours ;

Even now its perfume  
Made the weary one's room,  
Glad and sweet as a garden  
Of tropical bowers.

Though the green fields breathed gaily  
The fresh, sunny air,  
She said she was weary  
And could not be there ;  
Yet her bright, loving smile  
Made her seem all the while,  
O, never world weary,  
But tenderly fair.

And the spring's gentle creatures  
Awaited her care,  
Yet Heaven was tender,  
And her they must spare ;  
She had welcomed the birth  
Of the glad things of earth,

Now the peace of God's Spirit  
Was mightiest there.

Though the calm that she lived in  
Grew fairer each day,  
And though love, ever dearer,  
Besought her to stay,  
Though she lived in the charm  
That would shield from all harm,  
Yet One nearer and dearer  
Had call'd her away.

And so she was fading  
So surely each day,  
Like the violets fading  
In sweetness away ;  
As spring sinks to rest  
In the summer's warm breast,  
In Heaven's smile she was fading  
Serenely away.

She is tranquilly lying  
Where weary ones sleep,  
So peacefully lying  
While weary ones weep.  
She has found the repose  
That the grave aye bestows ;  
In God's earth she is lying,  
His purpose to keep.

We will raise no cold tablet  
Her green tomb above,—  
On our hearts she has graven  
A life-time of love ;  
And each day will raise  
Fresh memorial of praise,  
A warm, flowery tribute  
Of hope and of love.

And though we have laid her  
Just under the sod,

Though the loved one is resting,  
Her rest is in God ;  
Though lonely we tread  
By the grave of the dead,  
Our loved one is living,  
An angel of God.

While thinking of Ellen  
As happy above,  
We still grieve for Ellen,  
And long for her love ;  
And we think, though in Heaven  
All blessing is given,  
Our true-hearted Ellen  
Still asks for our love.

TO MARY.

---

I LOVE thee for thy gentle face,  
Thy form, that is so full of grace ;  
I love the pure and truthful mind  
That glows in every look refined.  
There is a nameless witchery  
In those dark eyes of thine, Mary,  
That beam so trustingly.

I love thy warm and generous heart ;  
There may I ever bear a part !  
I love that tender soul of thine ;  
'Tis love's all-consecrating shrine ;  
For at thy touch of harmony,  
Life moves to sweeter strains, Mary,  
And higher destiny.

It is not long since first we met ;  
Time has not tried our friendship yet ;  
But it must be as fair to me  
As a time-sanction'd bond could be ;  
For time must fail me, would I see  
Aught lovelier than thy love, Mary,  
    So trusting and so free !

LA SAINTE MONIQUE.

---

COME near, beloved—nearer still to me,  
And let this glory overshadow thee ;  
Look up ! that living light upon thy brow  
Has sign'd thy baptism and seal'd thy vow.

Blessed be God ! I did not fall away  
In all those lonely years ; though night and day,  
When this poor soul, so poor in all but love,  
Longing for pitying answer from above,

So often saw the heavy shadow fall ;  
So often heard this warning cry through all :  
“ Mother ! a spirit to thy care was given ;  
Mother ! why is thy son so far from heaven ? ”

Blessed be God ! my tears were not in vain ;  
My fainting heart is cheer'd and well again :  
That burning shame is lifted from my brow ;  
I hear no sad and warning voices now.

Listen ! our Angels are rejoicing o'er us ;  
Listen ! " True mother, waiting long before us,—  
Fair spirit, by its love so fervent known,—  
Thou never-weary, ever-trusting one,—

Thou art twice happy ; by the first child-birth,  
When thou didst give a son unto the earth ;  
And by this second birth-hour, that has given  
A tried and quicken'd spirit to its Heaven."

## THE PINE-BENDER'S DAUGHTER.

---

OLD Corinth's fair maid !

We must grieve for the land where thy ashes are laid :  
The gods have deserted its groves' sacred shade ;  
The oppressor has set his dull heel on the land,  
And its people are crush'd beneath tyranny's hand ;  
The iron has enter'd the heart of its sons,  
And the spirit of freedom the fallen one shuns.

And Time has grown gray ;

Old empires have crumbled before his broad sway,  
And creeds have been changed or have fallen away.  
But thy gentle loveliness lives for us still ;  
We tremble with thee at thy tempter's fierce will ;  
Our lips follow thine in their desolate prayer,  
And we echo the sigh of thy hopeless despair.

We hear thy light feet,  
Though their weight scarcely crushes the wild flowers  
they meet,  
And time has not silenced thy timid heart's beat.  
Fly, hide thee, pure child of an infamous sire !  
Through thy sin-nurtured youth thou hast pass'd as  
through fire ; .  
The crimes of the robber have sullied not thee,  
Thou honey-lipp'd flower of a poisonous tree !

Still on thou must fly ;  
For, ah ! the swift foot of the slayer is nigh.  
His oath has been utter'd,—'tis graven on high :  
" By the blood of thy father, still wet on my hand !  
By this temple, in whose sacred shadow I stand !  
Ah ! beautiful maiden, where'er thou may'st hide,  
No rest shall be mine until thou art my bride !"

O hard-hearted Pine !

Her poor, orphan'd ignorance makes thee her shrine :  
Bow, bend to the earth those full branches of thine :

Thou couldst aid in his crimes the dark chief of the  
wild,

And canst thou not succour his innocent child ?

Nay, wilt thou not bend, the poor maiden to cover  
From the fire-laden eyes of her red-handed lover ?

Then wave in the sun !

Thus pride ever turns from the desolate one ;

Thus the guilty the touch of the innocent shun.

Now, silver-leaved Olive ! awake to her prayer ;

Wilt thou too be cold to her cry of despair ?

It surely will move thee, that pitiful vow,—

That if thou wilt shield her and rescue her now,

Her future shall be

All unselfish and pure, and devoted to thee,

To help and to succour each wild Olive-tree ;

To live and to die with thy leaves in her hair,

And those leaves all most honour'd, for evermore bear.

No victor more worthy thy bright leaves have crown'd

Than one whom the tempters of earth never bound.

Never bound ! There was fear  
For the pureness of innocence ; now there's a tear  
For the fall of the fallen. He only was near,  
And a god in the sight of the maiden he stood,  
Masking sin's loveless image to combat the good.  
There's a blush for the hero who stoop'd to betray,  
And a sigh that the faith of youth passes away.

ORDER, LOVE AND LIBERTY.

---

To live or die in righteous cause, true birthright of  
the brave,

To make his race a legion strong from anarchy to save,  
That Liberty and Law and Love might have their  
meed of worth,

And that a lovely land might be right noble of the  
earth,

A poet, rich in gentle thoughts and music all his own,  
Must leave his still and starry realm earth's discords  
to atone.

O children of that lovely land ! bruise not those  
trailing wings,  
But bear them up as holier than the sceptred hands  
of kings !

As Spirit-ruler calm he stood, though the vast crowd  
below,  
By lawless wishes, passion-blind, surged darkly to  
and fro,

A better aspiration from a world-beclouded breast,  
Supported o'er the swelling waves by infinite behest.

So calmly trusting righteous cause unto the highest  
Power,

The soul's rare harmonies must hush the discords of  
the hour.

Though calmly trusting highest Power, too soon the  
spell is riven ;

The heavenly ministers to earth, but earth not yet  
to heaven.

Now peace, the poet's peace, be his,—that he shall  
surely find,

Though failing in his patriot hope, the ransom of his  
kind :

And all-sufficing be the love, though other love may  
die,

That gave the Poet's soul its sight, and wisdom to the  
cry :

Bind ye up the wounds of discord,—let the blood-red  
flag be furl'd !

Let the love-bonds of a brother be the heart-strings  
of a world.

Nations, echo this evangel, far as ocean folds the  
strand,

May the Poet's gentle lesson be the music of the  
land !

## THE LAST OF THE TWELVE.

---

THE Church's door was open'd wide ;  
In stream'd the golden eventide ;  
And radiant in the clear light bands,  
And o'er the shadows on the floor,  
Two holy men with reverent hands

The last Apostle bore.

The Fathers of the Church stood there,  
Bending with reverential air

Before the Bearer of the Word,  
That old man of a hundred years,  
The living Witness of their Lord,  
The last one left of all his peers.

This was the Gospel that they heard,  
In tones of a fond *elder* brother :

“ My little children, love each other !”

So, week by week, each Sabbath-day  
The Elders met to preach and pray ;  
And still within the fading light  
The faithful ones their burthen bore,  
And placed him in the Church’s sight

Upon the hallow’d floor ;  
His long white beard upon his breast,  
His quiet, folded hands at rest ;

The sacred Past seem’d then so nigh,—  
The kiss of Jesus,—the last look

From the high cross of Calvary,—  
The blessing, when the Father took

The holy One. With trembling sigh,  
He spoke like a departing mother :

“ My little children, love each other !”

“O thou, as wondrous as divine,  
Whose century has set its sign  
Upon thy heaven-directed eye,  
Upon thy consecrated brow,  
So surely for eternity,—

Thou, who art wearing now  
The golden frontlet of the first  
High-priest of the new faith we nurs’d!

Hast thou no other, higher word,  
No nobler Gospel? This one tires.”

The waning, weary life is stirr’d,  
And quicken’d to its old desires;

The Saint pleads for the risen Lord:  
“’Tis Christ’s command: ‘Love one another.’  
Do this, and you shall need no other.”

## THE DEATH OF MARY.

---

THE passing Angel stood by Mary's door  
To bear her forth, in answer to the call  
Of Heaven, "Come up hither!" As a child  
Lies with closed eyelids and meek, open brow,  
And lips half parted, waiting for the kiss  
Of coming sleep, the dying Mother lay ;  
Her golden hair shaded as smooth a brow,  
Her heavy lashes touch'd as fair a cheek,  
Her lips were waiting with as meek a faith,  
A kiss as soothing and as merciful.  
She was a child in loveliness and trust ;  
But in its consciousness, that still, deep soul,  
That had so long sustain'd itself, and fed

Upon immortal qualities, on truth  
And heavenly graces, that it could not die ;  
That soul, that was all love and no desire,  
All knowledge and no wonder,—whose clear sight  
Was not so much from the still, waiting past,  
As from the full-toned godliness of time's  
Most perfect future and complete design,  
Was a true woman's, and no more a child's.  
Mary stretch'd out her hand from her low couch,  
And open'd her wreath'd casement, and let in  
The perfume of the oleander flowers.  
The morning breezes stirr'd the clustering leaves,  
Whose changeful shadows trembled where she lay,  
And minister'd before her parting words :  
“ When my young life rejoiced beneath the palms,  
And my child voice was heard among the vines,  
A Spirit far more eloquent and fair  
Than nature's own, was with me where I went.  
And when, in maiden pride of happy love,  
I left the vineyards, and, by faith impell'd,

Trod the hill-sides of Judah, the same Power,  
Invisible, but all-pervading, still,  
But folding every sense, o'ershadow'd me.  
When, as a poor man's wife, sore travail-press'd,  
A weary stranger in a crowded place,  
My only refuge a throng'd, noisy court,  
That holy One, my little Babe, was born,—  
When his soft baby-cheek was laid to mine,  
And when his tender arms circled my neck,  
Those angel-faces of the by-gone time  
Seem'd present in that face so press'd to mine ;  
And those subduing voices seem'd to meet  
In the low murmurs of his rosy mouth.  
When, too, among the mothers of our land  
I took my place, more honour'd than were all,  
Those Heavenly Messengers were ever near,  
Spoke in the wondrous graces of my Child,  
And set upon each act and word and look  
A rich, perennial blessing, after-times  
Shall prove how mighty.

This poor soul of mine,  
Before the great, unutterable thought  
Of him I call'd my Son, had sunk and died,  
Had not this still communion with Heaven,  
Even from my birth, prepared and strengthen'd me.  
The Christ, and yet my Son ! His God and mine  
Has only known how ceaselessly my heart  
Has worn itself with silent questionings ;  
How I have ponder'd over his young life,  
And striven, from his thoughtful brow, to read  
The will that moved the present, and the soul  
That a great future dimly shadow'd forth.  
God only knows how this fond heart has throbb'd  
With its triumphant though unspoken bliss,  
With its ineffable, its fearful joy,  
As tidings in his absence came to me.  
God only knows how anxiously my feet,  
By day and night, in secret follow'd him  
O'er desert tracks and by the mountain-side,  
In the lone midnight and the burning noon ;

How I have trembled for his precious life,  
And wept, in secret, tears of agony,  
Though never bearing drop of bitterness ;  
How I have stood apart and pray'd for him  
When he beheld me not, and by those prayers  
Enter'd the secret of his life awhile.  
Of that I could not know,—the mystery  
Of his completer being, with its faith,  
Its abnegation,—nay, its mighty power  
Of blending all into the greatest good,—  
My love has been its own interpreter.

Of that still being, ever most intense,  
Most deep and high and holy, that by each,  
However watch'd and loved and minister'd,  
Must be fulfill'd and known alone with God,  
My love has been its own interpreter.

Of such a past, and of that agony  
Of anxious waiting and foreboding dread,

Those fearful tidings and that sinking faith,—  
That overwhelming grief that shut me in  
From light and life, so that the sun was dark,  
And the dim under-world made manifest,—  
Of that strange cross, and of its living crown,  
And of that hour when he, the young, fair Child,  
The noble and the good in glorious prime,  
Lay in these arms, silent and cold as death,—  
Of that bright vision by the garden tomb ;  
And of that meeting-point 'twixt earth and heaven,  
That last, long look, that radiant, godlike form,  
And sudden, gray eclipse,—my life has been.

Now I am weary and I long for rest,  
The calm, restoring quiet of the grave.  
Too sad, too lonely, for this heart of mine  
Would be the exemption that the followers,  
In their fond reverence of the risen One,  
Have thought he must have meted out for me.  
He who knows all our needs will not suspend  
For me the kind and universal law ;

He will not leave my soul to make its way  
Without a guide, missing the friendly gate  
That lets each weary, passing pilgrim in.  
I would lie down in earth and be renew'd,  
Even as the Christ lay down, to rise again."

The bonds of earth loosen'd so tenderly,  
Thus one with the eternal, though in time,  
The Mother scarcely knew that this was death,  
It was so like some Heavenly Messenger.  
So at the rising of the eternal Sun,  
The lovely Moon vanish'd in its heaven  
Of light and harmony.

#### The Followers

Gather'd about the pale and silent one,  
And bore her from her garden to her grave,—  
A tender love filling their eyes with tears,  
Filling their souls with grief, ere they beheld  
The visions of the wondrous Spirit-world.

## THE ONE.

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I KNEW thee from the first, a promised blessing,  
Long look'd for, and most graciously supplied :  
I know thee now, a treasure I'm possessing,  
A rich heart's treasure that must aye abide ;  
For aught so beautiful was surely given  
From the immortal things of bounteous Heaven.

There was no strangeness when we met, no mystery  
Hard to define, in that clear look of thine ;  
The long-lost volume of some prized life-history  
Was but restored to be bound up with mine.  
Thy voice was like a once familiar strain,  
Greeting my ear with music loved again.

The moon-flower opens its pale petals only,  
And all so brightly, to the moon's sweet light ;  
So thoughts that seem'd but vain and feelings lonely,  
Burst into full, true beauty in thy sight.  
The tree of being is not dark or hoary,  
But clothed all over with a pure, white glory.

The troubled sea curbs not its restless motion,  
Though its wild waves are silver'd o'er with light ;  
And the wide world chafes like an angry ocean,  
While over all love's lamp is clear and bright :  
In vain our bark may strive amid its strife,  
Yet love will sanctify and bless our life.

There is no tie, no golden tie to bind us  
To the world's love, its estimate of worth ;  
There is no glittering grace, no pomp to blind us ;  
We have no heritage upon the earth ;  
But we will clothe our hearts with joy and meekness,  
And feel God nearer in our very weakness.

Thou art His gift to me, so mine for ever ;

Then wherefore for my heart this anxious pain,  
Lest, proving all unworthy, I should sever

Blessing and purpose, and have lived in vain,  
And in the dusky future grope for thee,  
Hinder'd by broken chains of memory ?

Sometimes there is a dreary risk in loving

Too well a being clothed in mortal mould,  
Lest from the living Rock the soul removing,

Its heavenly tendencies grow dull and cold :  
But here this fearful chance can never be,—  
I love the Good and True in loving thee.

Life in thy presence is so smoothly flowing,

All is so beautiful, so well with me,  
Sunbeams and flowers are more brightly glowing,  
There is no cloud, no poverty with thee.  
O being threefold happy ! each fair duty  
Bears upon earth its crown of heavenly beauty.

Now from my soul one daily hope arises,  
With all the strength, the fervency of prayer,  
That what this heart so well and dearly prizes,  
May be sustain'd as the immortals are,  
Now and for ever as the blest above,  
And yet not wholly served without my love.



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